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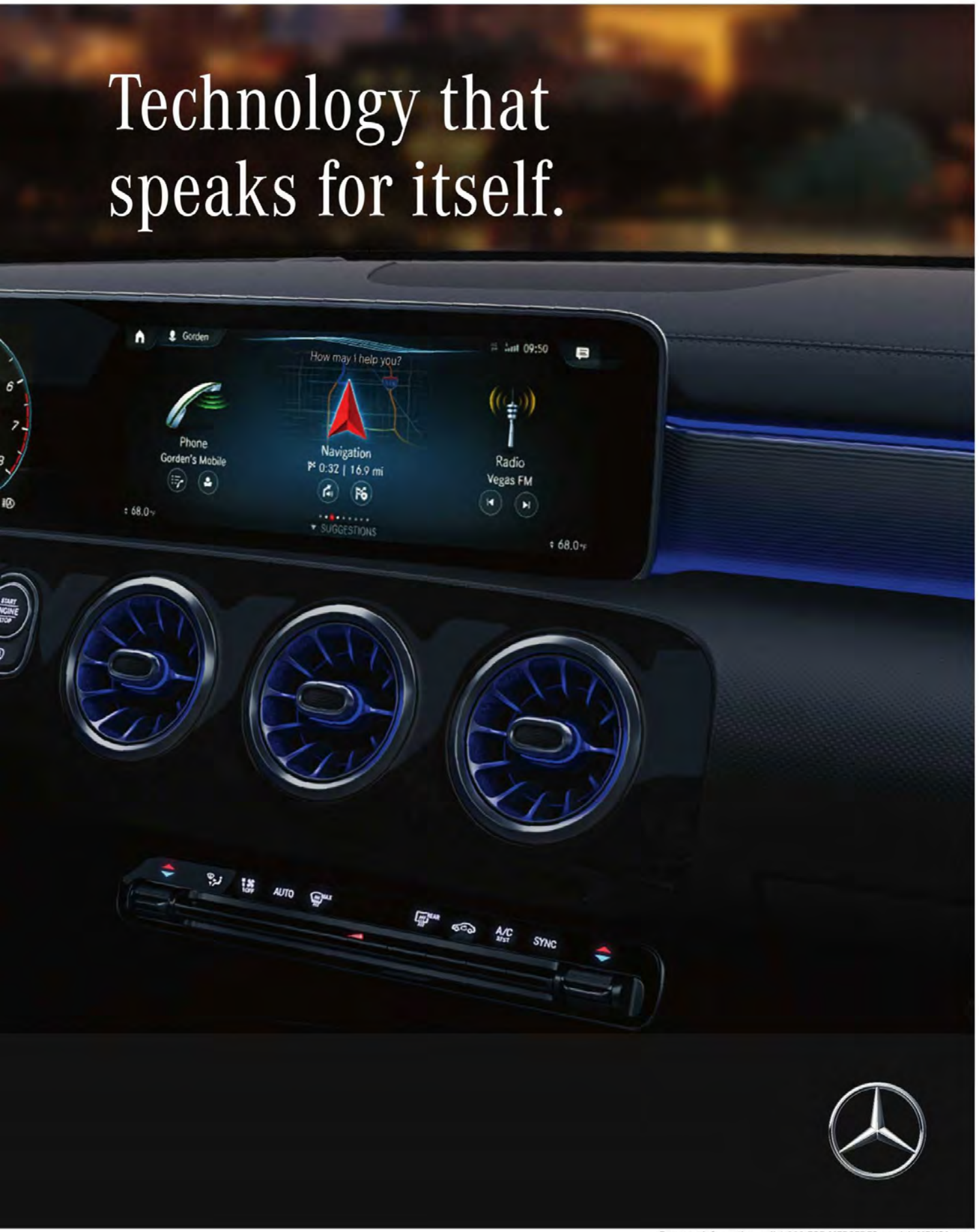

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THE PATRIOTS AND THE RAMS ARE READY TO GO OVER THE TOP IN SUPER BOWL LIII.

AIRING IT OUT IN ATLANTA

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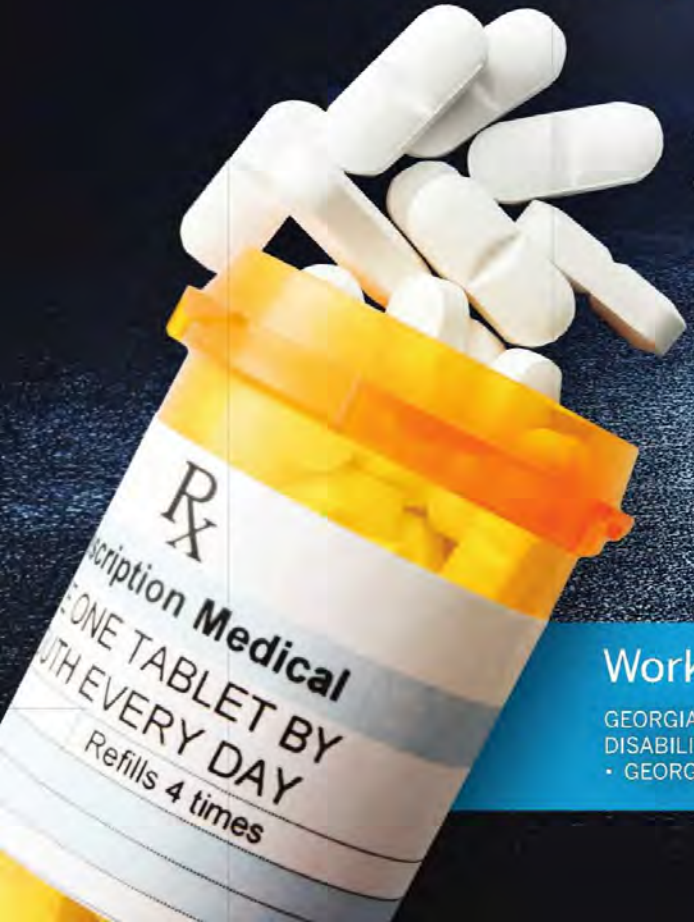

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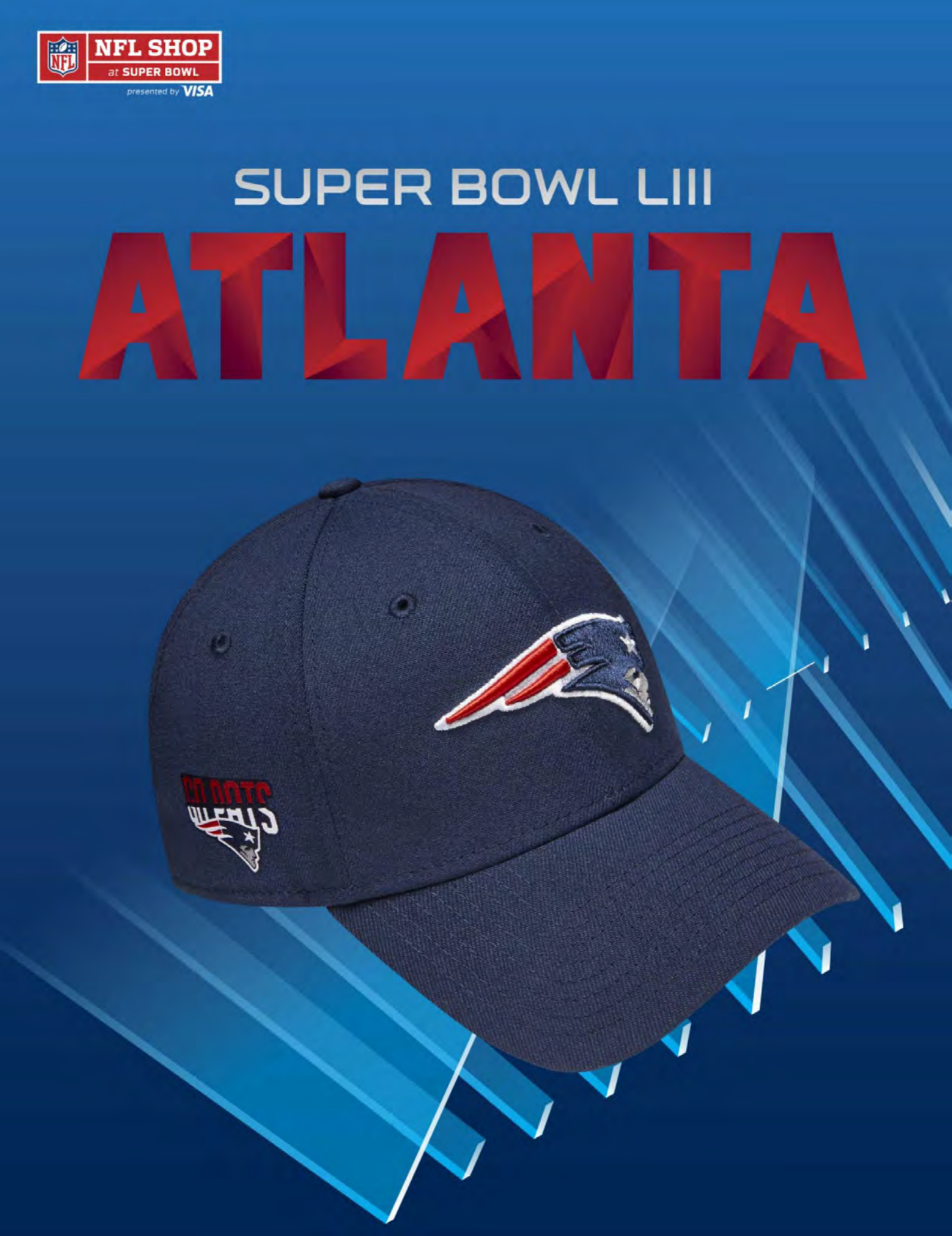

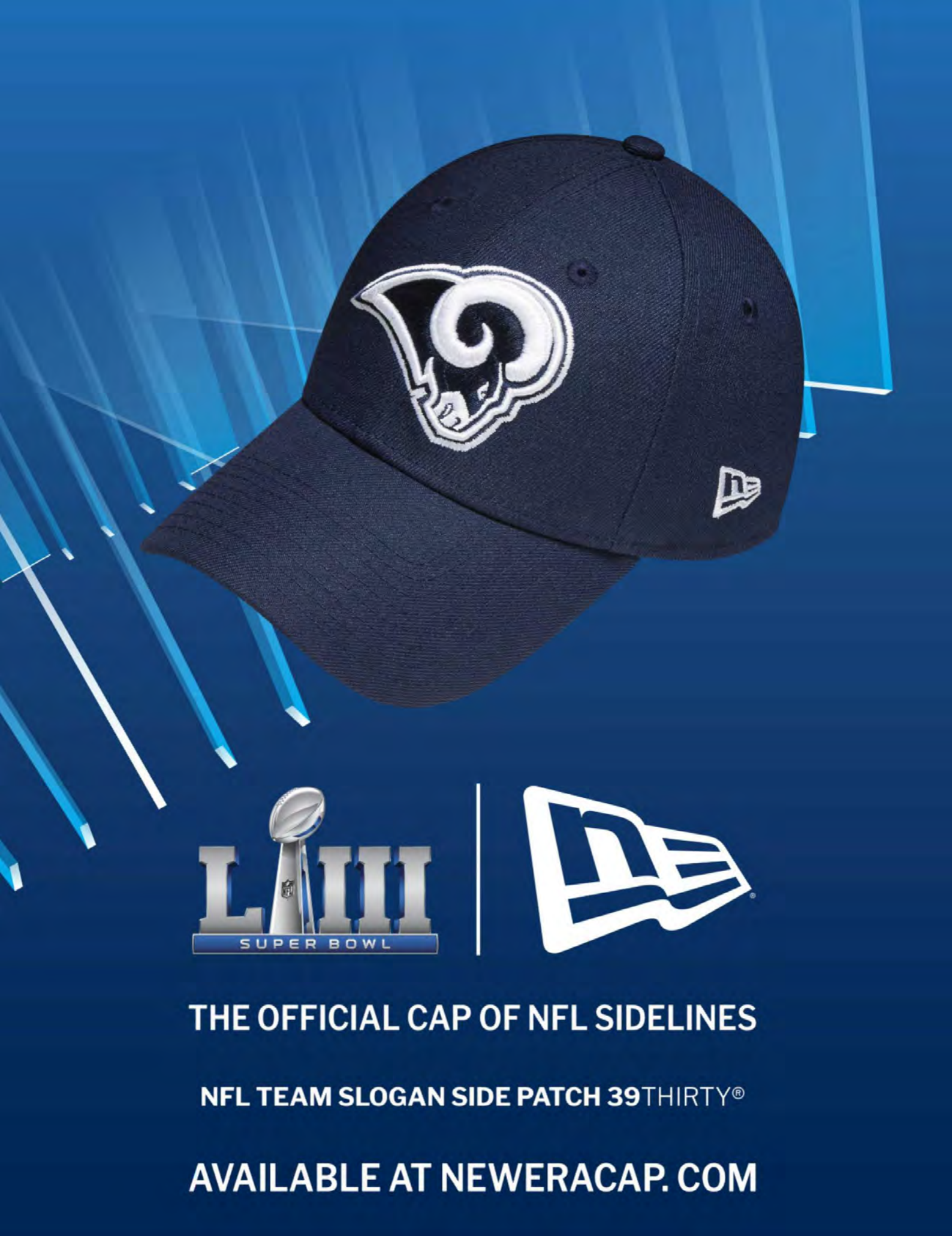
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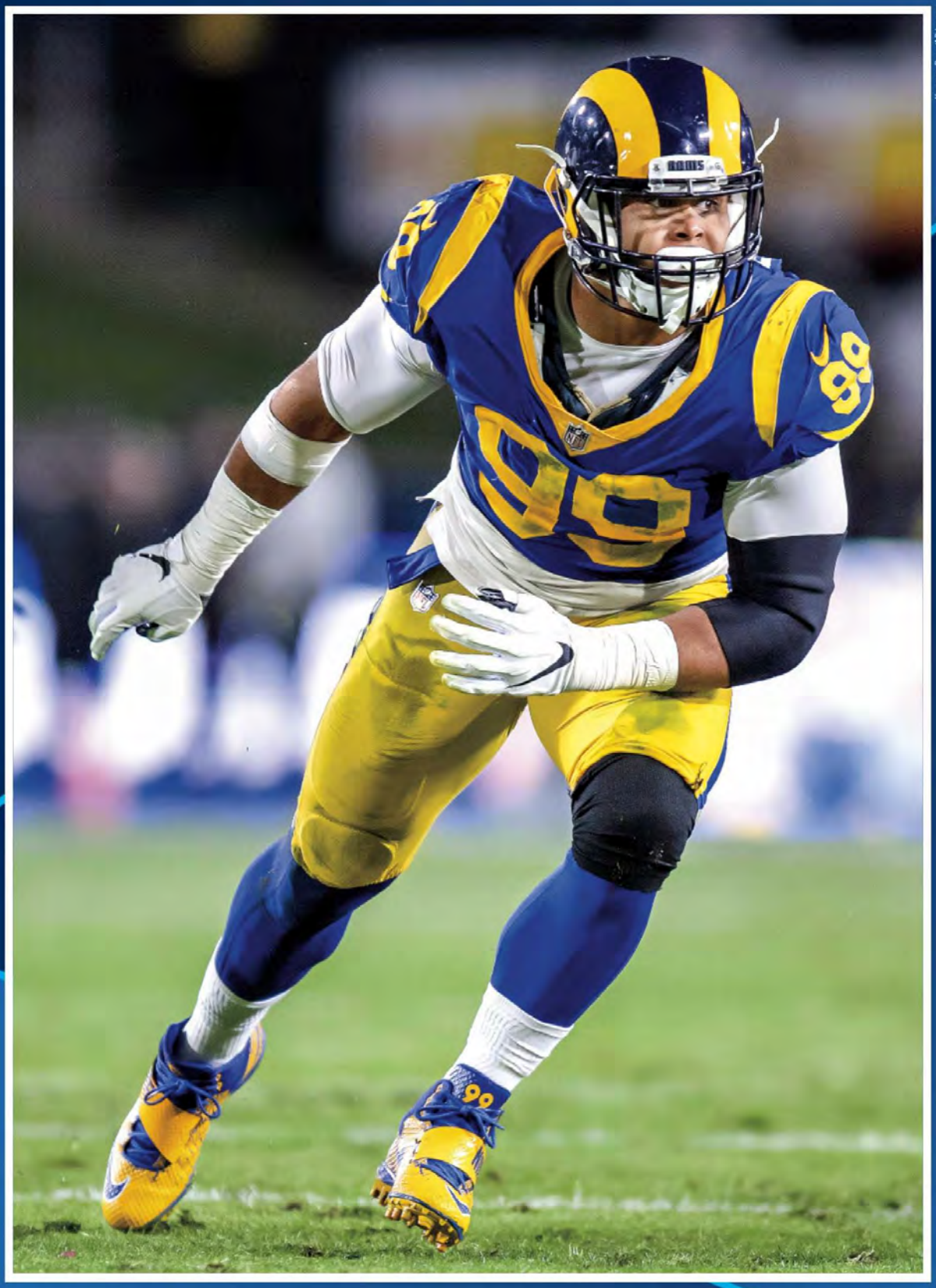

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[1] Not an actual federal refund nor a statistical compilation. This is a hypothetical taxpayer profile filed as Married Filing Jointly with no dependents and $94,000 in taxable wages. Estimated tax liability is $8,022; $12,900 federal withholdings and $3,500 state withholdings. The 2017 refund amount was $2,849 and calculated using the same hypothetical profile. Last year the average IRS refund was $3,169 as of 2/16/18.

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PATRIOTS SENSE A SIXTH TITLE

BY GEOFF MOSHER

IF THERE'S ONE THING we've learned about the New England Patriots during their dynastic run over the past 18 seasons, it's their ability to constantly reinvent themselves. Oh, and win.

Head coach Bill Belichick, QB Tom Brady, and owner Robert Kraft have been there for the full ride – their tickets to Canton punched long, long ago – but little else in Foxborough remains the same from year to year, except the results.

So, no, this may not be the most explosive offense nor the stingiest defense Belichick has assembled in his tenure. There isn't a roster full of all-stars (just two Patriots were named to the Pro Bowl), and maybe you won't find their players' names scrawled among the league's statistical leaders.

The Patriots don't care about any of that. All that matters is that they're playing in the Super Bowl for the third straight season – another amazing achievement for a franchise that never got the message that uninterrupted greatness isn't supposed to happen in today's NFL.

Yet, for all they've accomplished, motivation comes in the form of a sixth Super Bowl title, a number that would bump Kraft's franchise into a tie with the Steelers for most by any team in league history.

It's a testament to their talent, coaching, and resolve that the Patriots are here, especially given all the offseason whispers that this year's team wouldn't measure up with ones of the past.

Really?

All New England did was reach double figures in wins for the 16th straight season, equaling the 49ers' league record, and earn the AFC's No. 2 seed. They then throttled the Chargers in the Divisional playoffs and beat the host Chiefs, 37-31, in an overtime thriller for the conference crown.

"Stats don't win games. The Patriots figure out ways to win games and that's all that really matters," acknowledged Chargers head coach Anthony Lynn, who got a first-hand view.

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Tom Brady reached more milestones in 2018, topping 70,000 career passing yards and 500 passing TDs while leading the Patriots to another AFC championship.

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One of the Patriots' two first-round draft picks in 2018, **Sony Michel (left)** provided an instant spark to the ground game, rushing for 931 yards. Versatile players fit the New England mindset, as exemplified this season by **Cordarrelle Patterson (right)**, who caught 21 passes, rushed for 228 yards, and was a dangerous kick-returner.

THE OFFENSE

Any conversation about the juggernaut New England offense begins with "Tom Terrific," the team's 19-year QB who has a Super Bowl ring for every finger on his iconic right hand.

The legend of Brady began in 2001, when the unknown 2000 sixth-round pick from Michigan stepped in for an injured Drew Bledsoe, went 11-3, and orchestrated a playoff magic-carpet ride that ended with a 20-17 win over the Rams in Super Bowl XXXVI.

Seventeen years later, at the age of 41, Brady is making his ninth Super Bowl appearance, the most of anyone who has played the sport. He also has won more titles than anyone else, along with being selected to 14 Pro Bowls and winning three league MVPs.

For as much as opponents have tried, there simply isn't a coverage, scheme, blitz, formation, or disguise that Brady hasn't seen and beaten. He wins in the pre-snap game with his ability to diagnose defenses and understand where the openings for his receivers will be, based on the defensive look. His quick release and tremendous precision are kryptonite for even the tightest coverages and most lethal pass rushes.

In recent years, the Patriots have employed a faster-paced, shotgun, no-huddle attack that prevents defenses from making substitutions and allows Brady to feast off mismatches. Yet while Brady is arguably the greatest player in the league's long history, the Patriots are annually among the most diverse offenses – with a different "go-to" guy nearly every week.

To prove that point, this year's top pass-catcher was running back James White, who had 87 receptions, seven that went for touchdowns. Among wideouts, Julian Edelman was the primary target, with 74 receptions and six TDs.

Five Patriots finished with at least 500 receiving yards, tight end Rob Gronkowski among them, but none totaled more than 850. Brady's preference to spread the ball and exhaust every inch of the field makes the Patriots one of the most difficult offenses to defend, regardless of personnel.

This year, the offense leaned more on the ground game after drafting Georgia running back Sony Michel in the first round. Michel, a strong between-tackles runner who functions well whether Brady is in the shotgun or under center, finished his rookie season with 931 rushing yards, six touchdowns, and an average of 4.5 yards per carry.

Michel's power rushing blends perfectly with White's pass-catching acumen, giving the Patriots a diverse backfield committee that can flourish against base and nickel defenses. In

2018 PATRIOTS RESULTS (13-5)

Date	Opponent	Score	W/L
9/9	HOUSTON	27-20	W
9/16	Jacksonville	20-31	L
9/23	Detroit	10-26	L
9/30	MIAMI	38-7	W
10/4	INDIANAPOLIS	38-24	W
10/14	KANSAS CITY	43-40	W
10/21	Chicago	38-31	W
10/29	Buffalo	25-6	W
11/4	GREEN BAY	31-17	W
11/11	Tennessee	10-34	L
11/25	N.Y. Jets	27-13	W
12/2	MINNESOTA	24-10	W
12/9	Miami	33-34	L
12/16	Pittsburgh	10-17	L
12/23	BUFFALO	24-12	W
12/30	N.Y. JETS	38-3	W
AFC Playoffs			
1/13	L.A. CHARGERS	41-28	W
1/20	Kansas City	(OT) 37-31	W

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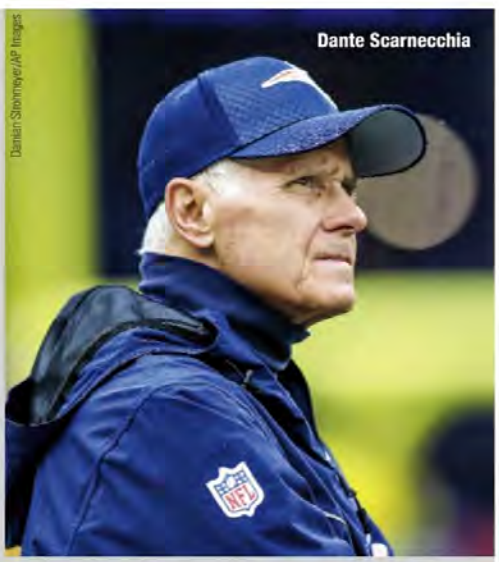
For the past three seasons, **Trey Flowers (left)** has been a significant force along the Patriots' defensive line. This year's stats included 7.5 sacks, 57 tackles, and three forced fumbles. Few NFL cornerbacks had as strong a year as **Stephon Gilmore (right)**, who earned First Team All-Pro honors after defensing 20 passes and intercepting two others.

AN ENDURING TENURE

Stability has long been a hallmark of the New England Patriots and is often credited as a primary reason for the franchise's success.

And no one has provided more stability than offensive line coach Dante Scarnecchia, who has been with the team for the better part of four decades. He first came aboard in 1982 when he joined coach Ron Myers' staff. Other than a two-year stint with the Colts in the late '80s and a short-lived retirement earlier this decade, he's been in Foxborough ever since. Of the Patriots' 11 Super Bowl appearances, Scarnecchia has been there for 10.



He's been a special assistant, defensive assistant, special teams coach, assistant head coach, and offensive line coach. He retired in 2014, and then came back for the 2016 season.

The reason? "I really like teaching the game," he said succinctly. His impact was immediate; after surrendering 38 sacks in 2015, the Patriots gave up just 16 the following year, which ended with the classic come-from-behind victory over the Falcons in Super Bowl LI.

"He's one of the greatest who ever coached," said former Patriots lineman Sebastian Vollmer. "You take a 'Joe Schmo' like me and make him a serviceable player; [he and the other coaches] do this over and over again, and it's amazing to watch."

addition to the damage he did in the pass game, White posted career highs with 94 carries, 425 yards, and five rushing scores.

White is no stranger to postseason success. In New England's 25-point comeback win against the Falcons two Super Bowls ago, he caught 14 passes – a Super Bowl record – for 110 yards and a touchdown while also rushing for 29 yards and two scores.

Brady may start the conversation, but no discussion of the Patriots' offense is complete without recognizing the line. This unit, expertly prepared by position coach Dante Scarnecchia, is a big reason Brady hasn't missed a game in 10 years. Tackles Trent Brown and Marcus Cannon, guards Joe Thuney and Shaq Mason, and center David Andrews yielded just 21 sacks this season, a stunningly low number for a team that threw the ball 574 times.

THE DEFENSE

Unlike other Patriots defenses that were built around the front seven, the current edition is known for its blue-chip talent in the defensive backfield. Two years ago, the team invested in free-agent cornerback Stephon Gilmore, and he paid dividends in 2018 with 20 pass

breakups – second-most in the NFL – along with two interceptions and two forced fumbles. He earned First Team All-Pro honors.

"My teams have played against [Gilmore] for a long time," Chiefs coach Andy Reid said earlier this year. "I've seen him do nothing but get better and better. I don't know his study habits, but you watch his game and you go, 'OK, this guy is sharp and spends time at his trade.' He's a heck of a player."

Gilmore and safety Devin McCourty, a two-time Pro Bowl selection, give the Patriots two studs in a secondary that sees more pass attempts than most because teams are often playing from behind. Undrafted rookie defensive back J.C. Jackson appears to be the latest find by Patriots scouts. He intercepted three passes this season, tied for second on the team.

Duron Harmon, one of three Rutgers products in the secondary, is another nice find. The 2013 third-round pick can line up at multiple positions in a plethora of sub packages. He picked off four passes for the second straight year and has at least one interception in each of his six seasons with the team.

The Patriots finished with 18 interceptions, tied for third in the NFL, and tied for the league's fifth-most takeaways, with 28.

Belichick, one of the league's true czars of defense going back to his days as a coordinator under two-time Super Bowl champion coach Bill Parcells, has employed a more aggressive, riskier blitz strategy at times this season. It adds to the pass rush while trusting the team's defensive backs to hold their own in single coverage. They usually do.

The front seven is powered by linebacker Dont'a Hightower (50 tackles, one sack), a mainstay in New England since 2012, and defensive end Trey Flowers (56 tackles, 7.5 sacks), another consistent performer.

A 2012 first-round pick, Hightower remains the team's most versatile and impactful linebacker with a track record of tackles for loss and quarterback hits during his postseason career. Flowers, meanwhile, also serves as one of the defense's most reliable run stoppers. He's forced five fumbles over the past two years.

As a testament to the Patriots' philosophy, despite being in the league's lower half in yards allowed, they posted a seventh straight top-10 finish in scoring defense. They surrendered 359.1 yards per game, which ranked 21st;

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS ALL-TIME PLAYOFF RESULTS

(36 WINS, 20 LOSSES)

Year	Round	Opponent	Score	W/L
1963	AFL Divisional	at Buffalo	26-8	W
	AFL Championship	at San Diego Chargers	10-51	L
1976	AFC Divisional	at Oakland	21-24	L
1978	AFC Divisional	Houston Oilers	14-31	L
1982	AFC Wild Card	at Miami	13-28	L
1985	AFC Wild Card	at N.Y. Jets	26-14	W
	AFC Divisional	at L.A. Raiders	27-20	W
	AFC Championship	at Miami	31-14	W
	Super Bowl XX	**Chicago**	**10-46**	**L**
1986	AFC Divisional	at Denver	17-22	L
1994	AFC Wild Card	at Cleveland	13-20	L
1996	AFC Divisional	Pittsburgh	28-3	W
	AFC Championship	Jacksonville	20-6	W
	Super Bowl XXXI	**Green Bay**	**21-35**	**L**
1997	AFC Wild Card	Miami	17-3	W
	AFC Divisional	at Pittsburgh	6-7	L
1998	AFC Wild Card	at Jacksonville	10-25	L
2001	AFC Divisional	Oakland	16-13 (OT)	W
	AFC Championship	at Pittsburgh	24-17	W
	Super Bowl XXXVI	**St. Louis Rams**	**20-17**	**W**
2003	AFC Divisional	Tennessee	17-14	W
	AFC Championship	Indianapolis	24-14	W
	Super Bowl XXXVIII	**Carolina**	**32-29**	**W**
2004	AFC Divisional	Indianapolis	20-3	W
	AFC Championship	at Pittsburgh	41-27	W
	Super Bowl XXXIX	**Philadelphia**	**24-21**	**W**
2005	AFC Wild Card	Jacksonville	28-3	W
	AFC Divisional	at Denver	13-27	L
2006	AFC Wild Card	N.Y. Jets	37-16	W
	AFC Divisional	at San Diego Chargers	24-21	W
	AFC Championship	at Indianapolis	34-38	L
2007	AFC Divisional	Jacksonville	31-20	W
	AFC Championship	San Diego Chargers	21-12	W
	Super Bowl XLII	**N.Y. Giants**	**14-17**	**L**
2009	AFC Wild Card	Baltimore	14-33	L
2010	AFC Divisional	N.Y. Jets	21-28	L
2011	AFC Divisional	Denver	45-10	W
	AFC Championship	Baltimore	23-20	W
	Super Bowl XLVI	**N.Y. Giants**	**17-21**	**L**
2012	AFC Divisional	Houston	41-28	W
	AFC Championship	Baltimore	13-28	L
2013	AFC Divisional	Indianapolis	43-22	W
	AFC Championship	at Denver	16-26	L
2014	AFC Divisional	Baltimore	35-31	W
	AFC Championship	Indianapolis	45-7	W
	Super Bowl XLIX	**Seattle**	**28-24**	**W**
2015	AFC Divisional	Kansas City	27-20	W
	AFC Championship	at Denver	18-20	L
2016	AFC Divisional	Houston	34-16	W
	AFC Championship	Pittsburgh	36-17	W
	Super Bowl LI	**Atlanta**	**34-28 (OT)**	**W**
2017	AFC Divisional	Tennessee	35-14	W
	AFC Championship	Jacksonville	24-20	W
	Super Bowl LII	**Philadelphia**	**33-41**	**L**
2018	AFC Divisional	L.A. Chargers	41-28	W
	AFC Championship	at Kansas City	37-31 (OT)	W

however, the 20.3 points per game they gave up was seventh-best in the league.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Four-time Pro Bowl kicker Stephen Gostkowski has spent his entire 13-year career in New England. He's the team's all-time leader in points and owns the highest field goal accuracy rate in franchise history (87.4 percent). Ryan Allen is likewise one of the most reliable at his trade. He averaged 45.1 yards per punt and had just five touchbacks on 64 punts in 2018.

Cordarrelle Patterson is always a threat to break a kickoff return, and Edelman is sure-handed and elusive returning punts. The Patriots also had the league's No. 2 kickoff coverage unit.

THE GAME PLAN

The strength of the Patriots remains their well-timed, ball-control offense guided by Brady, the game's preeminent maestro. His mission will be to lead long, sustained possessions that end in touchdowns, chew up the clock, and wear down the Rams' defense.

With some of the best interior receivers in the game, Brady will attack the middle of the field, preying on linebackers and slot defenders who typically aren't able to match up against Edelman, Gronkowski, and White.

While the defense will likely surrender yards, the idea is to trade field goals for touchdowns. And Belichick and company are confident in their ability to do that. Most teams have to score in the 30s just to hang with the Patriots, and falling behind opens the door for the defense to dial up additional pressure.

New England has long shown it's more likely to create takeaways than give the ball away. If the defense can flip the field once or twice, the Patriots become even more difficult to beat.

The fun part is to figure out who will take the star turn on Super Bowl Sunday. During the team's run of success, those names have included White, Deion Branch, Malcolm Butler, and Adam Vinatieri. And, of course, Brady.

But with the Patriots, it's never about the "who." It's about the team … and winning. And no one does that better.

Geoff Mosher is an award-winning reporter in his 14th season covering the NFL. He's co-host of the "Inside the Birds" podcast with Adam Caplan and Bill Osborn. Find his work at patreon.com/geoffmosher.

AFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

New England 37
KANSAS CITY 31 (OT)

WHAT ELSE WOULD YOU EXPECT? The most thrilling of NFL seasons just had to feature a conference championship game that will long live in the game's history.

In the end, it was the Patriots who prevailed – just barely – scoring a touchdown on the first possession of overtime to defeat the Chiefs and advance to the Super Bowl for the third consecutive season. That's where they'll meet the Rams, 17 years to the day after their classic Super Bowl XXXVI battle.

New England appeared to have won the game in regulation when Rex Burkhead scored on a four-yard run with 35 seconds to play. But Kansas City quarterback Patrick Mahomes needed just two plays to cover 48 yards and bring Harrison Butker into range for a 38-yard field goal that sent the AFC title game into overtime for the first time since the 1986 season.

New England won the OT coin toss, took the ball, and proceeded to march 75 yards, with QB Tom Brady converting three long third downs along the way before Burkhead again powered over the goal line, this time from two yards.

For all the late-game fireworks, it was defense that gave the Patriots an early cushion. The Chiefs were held scoreless over the first 30 minutes, while New England scored two TDs. Sony Michel capped the opening drive with a one-yard run, and Brady added to that margin just before halftime when he found Phillip Dorsett free in the left corner of the end zone for a 29-yard touchdown.

Things got electric from there. Kansas City stormed back, breaking the ice with a 12-yard Travis Kelce TD grab and then erupting for 24 fourth-quarter points. The outburst was led by Damien Williams, who scored twice on pass receptions and once on a run. Yet the Patriots responded each time in a quarter that saw four lead changes in a span of seven minutes.

Brady completed 30 of 46 passes for 348 yards, with Julian Edelman's seven catches leading a balanced receiving corps. Michel rushed for a game-high 113 yards.

ARROWHEAD STADIUM
Kansas City, Mo. **Jan. 20, 2019**

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	F
New England	7	7	3	14	6	37
Kansas City	0	0	7	24	0	31

1st Quarter
NE Michel 1 run (Gostkowski kick), 8:05

2nd Quarter
NE Dorsett 29 pass from Brady (Gostkowski kick), 14:33

3rd Quarter
KC Kelce 12 pass from Mahomes (Butker kick), 2:04
NE Gostkowski 47 FG, 10:58

4th Quarter
KC Dam. Williams 1 pass from Mahomes (Butker kick), 0:09
KC Dam. Williams 23 pass from Mahomes (Butker kick), 7:15
NE Michel 10 run (Gostkowski kick), 11:28
KC Dam. Williams 2 run (Butker kick), 12:57
NE Burkhead 4 run (Gostkowski kick), 14:21
KC Butker 39 FG, 14:52

Overtime
NE Burkhead 2 run, 4:52

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ROBERT KRAFT Owner

ROBERT KRAFT attended his first Patriots game the year of the franchise's inception in 1960 and became a Patriots season ticket member when they moved to Foxborough in 1971. On Jan. 21, 1994, after 23 years as a season ticket member, Kraft fulfilled a lifelong dream when he bought his hometown franchise.

That day, he not only kept the team from relocating, but also promised to bring a championship to New England. In the 25 seasons since, he has delivered on that pledge several times over, as the Patriots have won five Super Bowl titles, 10 conference championships, 18 division crowns, and qualified for the playoffs 20 times.

Under Kraft's leadership, the Patriots have transformed from one of the league's worst clubs to one of the most successful franchises in NFL history. During the Kraft era, the Patriots own the NFL's best win-loss record (311-135) and have won an NFL-best five Super Bowls, two more than any other team. The Patriots' .697 winning percentage is not only the best in the NFL during Kraft's ownership, but also the highest winning percentage across all five major American professional sports.

Kraft has served on many of the NFL's most prominent committees and is regarded as one of the league's most influential owners. In 2011, he was principally involved in the negotiations with the NFLPA to end the NFL labor dispute. Many people involved in the negotiations credited Kraft for his role in getting the deal done.

Later that same year, in his role as chairman of the Broadcast Committee, Kraft helped ensure NFL fans another decade of football without interruption by negotiating the long-term extensions of the CBS, FOX, and NBC contracts, as well as extensions of the broadcasting agreements with DirecTV and Comcast.

Kraft is the founder, chairman, and CEO of the Kraft Group, which is based in the Patriots' home of Foxborough, Mass. The Kraft Group is the holding company of the Kraft family's many businesses, with interests concentrated in the following areas: manufacturing of paper and packaging, international distribution of forest products, sports and entertainment, real estate development, private equity investing, and philanthropy.

Kraft is on the executive committee for the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, where he established the Robert K. Kraft Family Blood Donor Center. Over the past five decades, the Krafts have been one of New England's most philanthropic families, donating hundreds of millions in support of local charities and civic affairs. The Krafts pledged $25 million to Partners HealthCare to launch the Kraft Center for Community Health, an initiative designed to improve the leadership of and access to quality health care at community centers throughout Massachusetts, with the goal of expanding the model nationally.

Robert Kraft serves a meal at the Women's Lunch Place, a day shelter for homeless women in the greater Boston area. Kraft and his family have a longstanding commitment to community service.

Last year, the Krafts expanded their investment in community healthcare with an innovative mobile CareZone program, designed to engage individuals in communities who are struggling with addiction and complex health conditions.

In 2015, Kraft was presented the Distinguished Citizen Award by the Congressional Medal of Honor Society in recognition for his support of our country's armed forces and shared ideals. This year, he was selected as the 2019 Genesis Prize Laureate, described as the "Jewish Nobel" by *Time*.

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS TEAM OFFICIALS

ROBERT KRAFT
Chairman and CEO

JONATHAN A. KRAFT
President

DAN KRAFT
Director

JOSH KRAFT
President of New England Patriots Foundation

JENNIFER FERRON
Chief Marketing Officer

JIM NOLAN
Chief Operating Officer

JON BENGTSON
Field Superintendent

ROBIN BOUDREAU
Vice President of Human Resources

BOBBY BROWN
Coordinator, Football Operations and Team Travel

NICK CASERIO
Director of Player Personnel

BILL CHRISTIANSEN
Senior Director of Security Operations

JIM COBERY
General Counsel, The Kraft Group

PAT CURLEY
Vice President of Information Technology

JIMMY DEE
Video Director

JACK EASTERBY
Character Coach/ Team Development

ROBYN GLASER
Vice President, The Kraft Group and Club Counsel, the New England Patriots

STACEY JAMES
Vice President of Media and Community Relations

FRED KIRSCH
Publisher and Vice President of Content

MURRAY KOHL
Vice President of Corporate Sponsorship Sales

GREG MARMAROS
Coordinator, Football Operations and Team Travel

CHRIS MATTES
Coordinator, Player Operations and Engagement

RICHARD MILLER
Research Director

BRYAN MORRY
Executive Director of The Patriots Hall of Fame presented by Raytheon

BRENDEN MURPHY
Equipment Manager

DAN MURPHY
Vice President of Stadium Business Development and External Affairs

BERJ NAJARIAN
Director of Football/Head Coach Administration

DAVID PEARLSTEIN
Vice President of Corporate Relationships

MATT PIEKARSKI
Senior Director of Parking

JIM SCOLLINS
Senior Director of Retail Operations

MATT SMITH
Senior Executive Producer of Broadcast Production

TRACY SORMANTI
Cheerleader Director

JASON STONE
Senior Director of Stadium Operations

ANDRE TIPPETT
Executive Director of Community Affairs

GAIL TITUS
Senior Director of Stadium Project Integration

ALI TOWLE
Senior Director of Brand and Fan Experience

JIM WHALEN
Head Athletic Trainer

DAVID WHEELER
Vice President of Food and Beverage

JIM WILSON
Vice President of Finance/Ticketing

BILL BELICHICK Head Coach

BILL BELICHICK, who is completing his 44th season as a coach in the NFL and 19th at the helm of the Patriots, is the only head coach in history to win five Super Bowl titles.

Patriots Chairman & CEO Robert Kraft acquired Belichick in a trade with the Jets in 2000. By 2004, Belichick had already led the Patriots to three Super Bowl titles, marking the first time that a head coach had won three Super Bowls in four years (2001-04). With a win in Super Bowl LIII, he would join George Halas and Curly Lambeau as the only head coaches in NFL history with six league titles.

Belichick ranks third in the NFL with 291 career wins, including an NFL-record 30 in the postseason, and is 254-89 (.741) with the Patriots, including the postseason. He has guided New England to 16 AFC East titles, and his current streak of 10 straight division crowns is an NFL record. Belichick is a three-time Associated Press NFL Coach of the Year (2003, 2007, 2010).

He entered the coaching ranks in 1975 with the Colts and held assistant positions with the Lions, Broncos, and Giants before serving as head coach of the Cleveland Browns from 1991-95.

Born April 16, 1952, Belichick lettered in football, lacrosse, and squash at Wesleyan, where he earned his bachelor's degree in economics.

ASSISTANT COACHES

CAM ACHORD .....Assistant Special Teams
ATIF AUSTIN.....Coaching Assistant
BRIAN BELICHICK.....Coaching Assistant
STEVE BELICHICK.....Safeties
BRET BIELEMA.....Consultant to the Head Coach
JOSH BOYER.....Cornerbacks
MOSES CABRERA.....Head Strength & Conditioning
NICK CALEY.....Tight Ends
DeMARCUS COVINGTON.....Coaching Assistant
BRENDAN DALY.....Defensive Line
IVAN FEARS.....Running Backs
BRIAN FLORES.....Linebackers
JOE JUDGE.....Special Teams
DERON MAYO.....Assistant Strength & Conditioning
JOSH McDANIELS.....Offensive Coordinator/Quarterbacks
CHAD O'SHEA.....Wide Receivers
MIKE PELLEGRINO.....Coaching Assistant
COLE POPOVICH.....Coaching Assistant
DANTE SCARNECCHIA.....Offensive Line
JERRY SCHUPLINSKI.....Assistant Quarterbacks

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS ALPHABETICAL ROSTER

NO	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	BIRTH DATE	NFL EXP	COLLEGE	HOW ACQUIRED
83	**Allen**, Dwayne	TE	6-3	265	2/24/90	7	Clemson	FA '13
6	**Allen**, Ryan	P	6-2	220	2/28/90	6	Louisiana Tech	TR (IND) '17
80	**Anderson**, Stephen	TE	6-3	230	1/30/93	3	California	FA '18
60	**Andrews**, David	C	6-3	300	7/10/92	4	Georgia	FA '15
12	**Brady**, Tom	QB	6-4	225	8/3/77	19	Michigan	D6b '00
90	**Brown**, Malcom	DL	6-2	320	2/2/94	4	Texas	TR (SF) '18
77	**Brown**, Trent	OL	6-8	380	4/13/93	4	Florida	D1 '15
34	**Burkhead**, Rex	RB	5-10	215	7/2/90	6	Nebraska	UFA (CIN) '17
70	**Butler**, Adam	DL	6-5	300	4/12/94	2	Vanderbilt	FA '17
61	**Cannon**, Marcus	OL	6-6	335	5/6/88	8	Texas Christian	D5a '11
49	**Cardona**, Joe	LS	6-3	245	4/16/92	4	Navy	D5 '15
23	**Chung**, Patrick	S	5-11	215	8/19/87	10	Oregon	FA '14
94	**Clayborn**, Adrian	DE	6-3	280	7/6/88	8	Iowa	UFA (ATL) '18
35	**Crossen**, Keion	DB	5-10	185	4/17/96	R	Western Carolina	D7b '18
58	**Davis**, Keionta	DL	6-4	280	3/1/94	2	Tennessee-Chattanooga	FA '17
29	**Dawson Jr.**, Duke	DB	5-10	198	10/13/95	R	Florida	D2 '18
46	**Develin**, James	FB	6-3	255	7/23/88	6	Brown	FA '12
13	**Dorsett**, Phillip	WR	5-10	192	1/5/93	4	Miami (Fla.)	TR (IND) '17
43	**Ebner**, Nate	DB	6-0	215	12/14/88	7	Ohio State	D6 '12
11	**Edelman**, Julian	WR	5-10	198	5/22/86	10	Kent State	D7a '09
66	**Ferentz**, James	OL	6-2	300	6/5/89	3	Iowa	FA '17
98	**Flowers**, Trey	DL	6-2	265	8/16/93	4	Arkansas	D4a '15
24	**Gilmore**, Stephon	CB	6-1	202	9/19/90	7	South Carolina	UFA (BUF) '17
3	**Gostkowski**, Stephen	K	6-1	215	1/28/84	13	Memphis	D4b '06
87	**Gronkowski**, Rob	TE	6-6	268	5/14/89	9	Arizona	D2a '10
93	**Guy**, Lawrence	DL	6-4	315	3/17/90	8	Arizona State	UFA (BAL) '17
21	**Harmon**, Duron	DB	6-1	205	1/24/91	6	Rutgers	D3b '13
54	**Hightower**, Dont'a	LB	6-3	260	3/12/90	7	Alabama	D1b '12
15	**Hogan**, Chris	WR	6-1	210	10/24/87	6	Monmouth	RFA (BUF) '16
2	**Hoyer**, Brian	QB	6-2	216	10/13/85	10	Michigan State	FA '17
50	**Humber**, Ramon	LB	5-11	232	8/10/87	10	North Dakota State	FA '18
27	**Jackson**, J.C.	DB	6-1	198	11/17/95	R	Maryland	FA '18
31	**Jones**, Jonathan	DB	5-10	190	9/20/93	3	Auburn	FA '16
97	**Kamalu**, Ufomba	DL	6-6	295	11/2/92	3	Miami (Fla.)	FA '18
75	**Karras**, Ted	OL	6-4	305	3/15/93	3	Illinois	D6c '16
36	**King**, Brandon	LB	6-2	220	6/8/93	4	Auburn	FA '15
69	**Mason**, Shaq	OL	6-1	310	8/28/93	4	Georgia Tech	D4c '15
59	**McClellan**, Albert	LB	6-2	235	6/4/86	8	Marshall	FA '18
32	**McCourty**, Devin	S	5-10	195	8/13/87	9	Rutgers	TR (CLE) '18
30	**McCourty**, Jason	CB	5-11	195	8/13/87	10	Rutgers	D1 '10
22	**Melifonwu**, Obi	DB	6-4	224	4/5/94	2	Connecticut	FA '18
26	**Michel**, Sony	RB	5-11	215	2/17/95	R	Georgia	D1b '18
84	**Patterson**, Cordarrelle	WR	6-2	228	3/17/91	6	Tennessee	TR (OAK) '18
95	**Rivers**, Derek	DE	6-5	250	5/9/94	2	Youngstown State	D3a '17
52	**Roberts**, Elandon	LB	6-0	238	4/22/94	3	Houston	D6b '16
71	**Shelton**, Danny	DL	6-2	345	8/20/93	4	Washington	TR (CLE) '18
55	**Simon**, John	DE	6-2	260	10/14/90	6	Ohio State	FA '18
18	**Slater**, Matthew	WR	6-0	205	9/9/85	11	UCLA	D5 '08
62	**Thuney**, Joe	OL	6-5	308	11/18/92	3	North Carolina State	D3a '16
53	**Van Noy**, Kyle	LB	6-3	250	3/26/91	5	Brigham Young	TR (DET) '16
68	**Waddle**, LaAdrian	OL	6-6	315	7/21/91	6	Texas Tech	CW (DET) '15
28	**White**, James	RB	5-10	205	2/3/92	5	Wisconsin	D4b '14
91	**Wise Jr.**, Deatrich	DL	6-5	275	7/26/94	2	Arkansas	D4 '17

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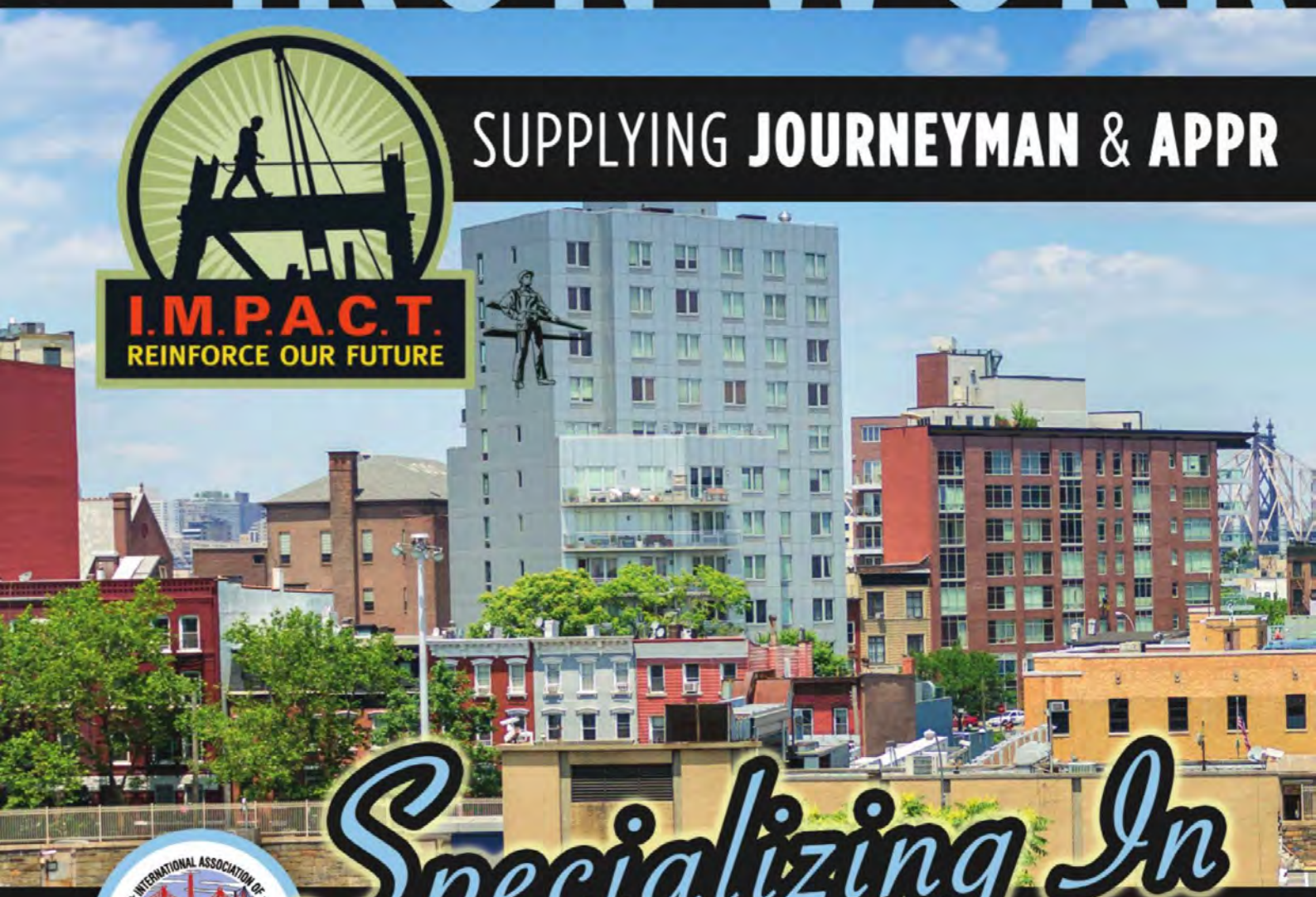

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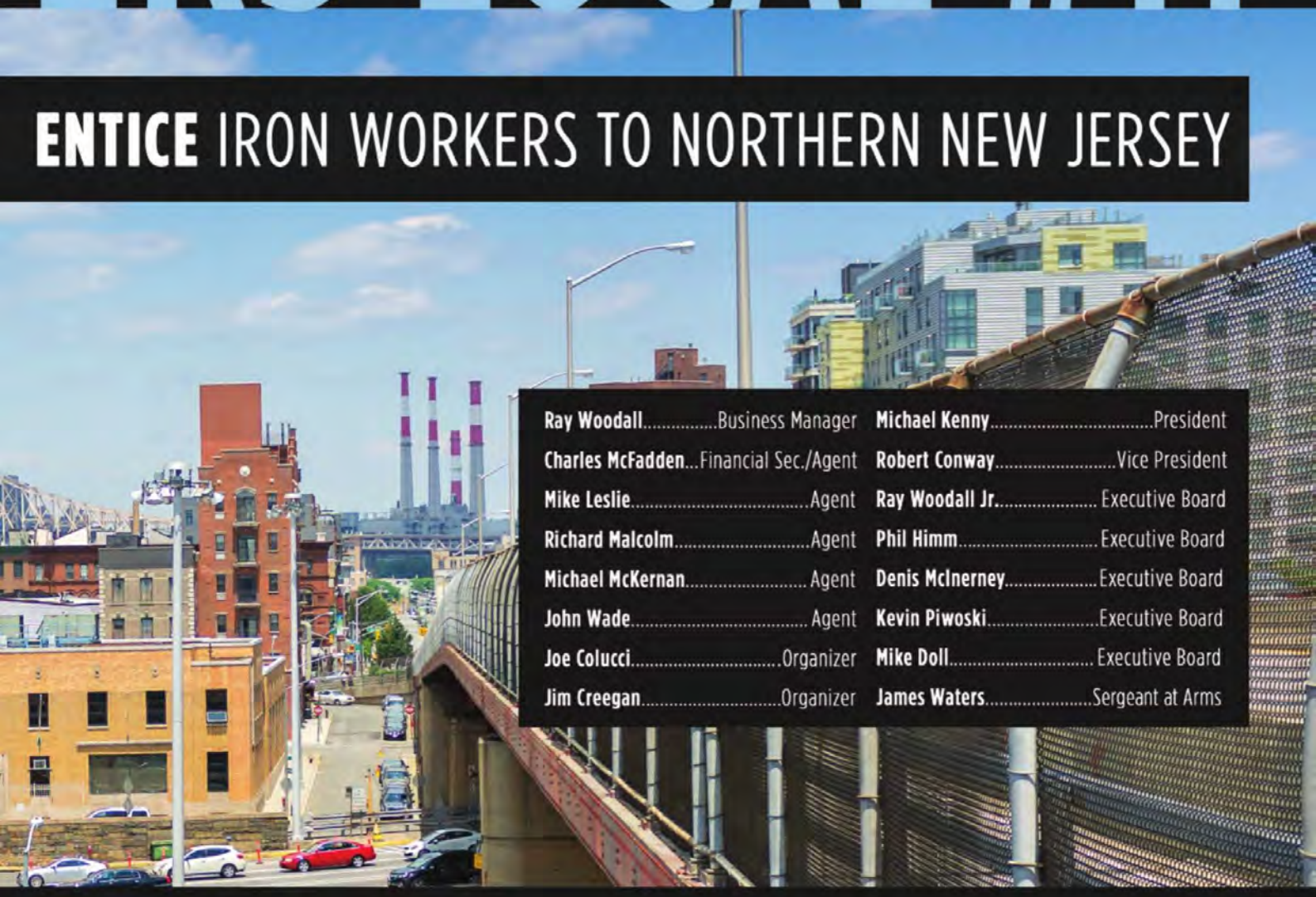

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AFC CHAMPIONS

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

Dwayne Allen (83)
Tight End

Ryan Allen (6)
Punter

Stephen Anderson (80)
Tight End

David Andrews (60)
Center

Tom Brady (12)
Quarterback

Malcom Brown (90)
Defensive Lineman

Trent Brown (77)
Offensive Lineman

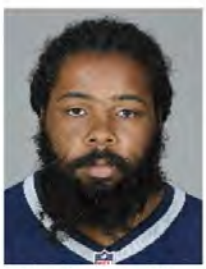
Rex Burkhead (34)
Running Back

Adam Butler (70)
Defensive Lineman

Marcus Cannon (61)
Offensive Lineman

Joe Cardona (49)
Long Snapper

Patrick Chung (23)
Safety



Adrian Clayborn (94)
Defensive End

Keion Crossen (35)
Defensive Back

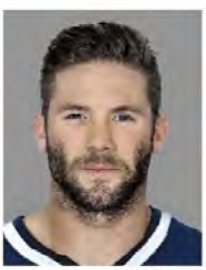
Keionta Davis (58)
Defensive Lineman

Duke Dawson Jr. (29)
Defensive Back

James Develin (46)
Fullback

Phillip Dorsett (13)
Wide Receiver

Nate Ebner (43)
Defensive Back



Julian Edelman (11)
Wide Receiver

James Ferentz (66)
Offensive Lineman

Trey Flowers (98)
Defensive Lineman

Stephon Gilmore (24)
Cornerback

Stephen Gostkowski (3)
Kicker

Rob Gronkowski (87)
Tight End

Lawrence Guy (93)
Defensive Lineman

Duron Harmon (21)
Defensive Back

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AFC CHAMPIONS

Dont'a Hightower (54)
Linebacker

Chris Hogan (15)
Wide Receiver

Brian Hoyer (2)
Quarterback

Ramon Humber (50)
Linebacker

J.C. Jackson (27)
Defensive Back

Jonathan Jones (31)
Defensive Back

Ufomba Kamalu (97)
Defensive Lineman

Ted Karras (75)
Offensive Lineman

Brandon King (36)
Linebacker

Shaq Mason (69)
Offensive Lineman

Albert McClellan (59)
Linebacker

Devin McCourty (32)
Safety

Jason McCourty (30)
Cornerback

Obi Melifonwu (22)
Defensive Back

Sony Michel (26)
Running Back

Cordarrelle Patterson (84)
Wide Receiver

Derek Rivers (95)
Defensive End

Elandon Roberts (52)
Linebacker

Danny Shelton (71)
Defensive Lineman

John Simon (55)
Defensive End

Matthew Slater (18)
Wide Receiver

Joe Thuney (62)
Offensive Lineman

Kyle Van Noy (53)
Linebacker

LaAdrian Waddle (68)
Offensive Lineman

James White (28)
Running Back

Deatrich Wise Jr. (91)
Defensive Lineman

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NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS
STATS/ROSTER/LINEUPS

STATISTICAL LEADERS

PASSING	COMP-ATT	PCT	YDS	TD	INT	RTNG
TOM **BRADY**	375-570	65.8	4355	29	11	97.7
BRIAN **HOYER**	1-2	50.0	7	0	0	58.3

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
SONY **MICHEL**	209	931	4.5	34	6
JAMES **WHITE**	94	425	4.5	27	5

RECEIVING	NO	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
JAMES **WHITE**	87	751	8.6	42	7
JULIAN **EDELMAN**	74	850	11.5	36	6
ROB **GRONKOWSKI**	47	682	14.5	42	3
JOSH **GORDON**	41	737	18.0	55	4
CHRIS **HOGAN**	35	532	15.2	63	3

DEFENSE	TACKLES	ASSISTS	TOTAL	SACKS/YARDS	PD	FF
KYLE **VAN NOY**	56	34	90	3.5/28	2	1
PATRICK **CHUNG**	51	29	80	0.5/5	3	0
DEVIN **McCOURTY**	53	22	75	0.0/0	4	1
JASON **McCOURTY**	53	15	68	0.0/0	10	1
ELANDON **ROBERTS**	32	34	66	1.0/7	4	0
LAWRENCE **GUY**	25	35	60	1.0/9	0	1
TREY **FLOWERS**	32	24	56	7.5/60	2	3

INTERCEPTIONS	NO	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
DURON **HARMON**	4	0	0.0	0	0
JONATHAN **JONES**	3	34	11.3	28	0
J.C. **JACKSON**	3	9	3.0	9	0
STEPHON **GILMORE**	2	0	0.0	0	0

KICK RETURNS	RET	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
CORDARRELLE **PATTERSON**	23	663	28.8	95	1

PUNT RETURNS	RET	FC	AVG	LONG	TD
JUILIAN **EDELMAN**	20	11	7.7	25	0

PUNTING	NO	AVG	NET	TCHBK	IN/20	LONG
RYAN **ALLEN**	64	45.1	39.5	5	21	66

FIELD GOALS	TOTAL	1-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50+
STEPHEN **GOSTKOWSKI**	27/32	0/0	11/11	10/10	4/6	2/5

OFFENSIVE DEPTH CHART

WR	15	**CHRIS HOGAN**
	84	CORDARRELLE PATTERSON
LT	77	**TRENT BROWN**
	68	LaADRIAN WADDLE
LG	62	**JOE THUNEY**
	66	JAMES FERENTZ
C	60	**DAVID ANDREWS**
	75	TED KARRAS
RG	69	**SHAQ MASON**
	75	TED KARRAS
RT	61	**MARCUS CANNON**
	68	LaADRIAN WADDLE
TE	87	**ROB GRONKOWSKI**
	83	DWAYNE ALLEN
WR	11	**JULIAN EDELMAN**
	13	PHILLIP DORSETT
QB	12	**TOM BRADY**
	2	BRIAN HOYER
RB	26	**SONY MICHEL**
	46	JAMES DEVELIN
RB	28	**JAMES WHITE**
	34	REX BURKHEAD

DEFENSIVE DEPTH CHART

LE	98	**TREY FLOWERS**
	94	ADRIAN CLAYBORN
DT	93	**LAWRENCE GUY**
	71	DANNY SHELTON
DT	90	**MALCOM BROWN**
	70	ADAM BUTLER
RE	91	**DEATRICH WISE JR.**
	95	DEREK RIVERS
LB	54	**DONT'A HIGHTOWER**
	50	RAMON HUMBER
LB	52	**ELANDON ROBERTS**
	59	ALBERT McCLELLAN
LB	53	**KYLE VAN NOY**
	59	ALBERT McCLELLAN
LCB	30	**JASON McCOURTY**
	27	J.C. JACKSON
S	23	**PATRICK CHUNG**
	21	DURON HARMON
S	32	**DEVIN McCOURTY**
	43	NATE EBNER
RCB	24	**STEPHON GILMORE**
	31	JONATHAN JONES

SPECIALISTS DEPTH CHART

P	6	**RYAN ALLEN**
K	3	**STEPHEN GOSTKOWSKI**
LS	49	**JOE CARDONA**
H	6	**RYAN ALLEN**
PR	11	**JULIAN EDELMAN**
	23	PATRICK CHUNG
KR	84	**CORDARRELLE PATTERSON**
	18	MATTHEW SLATER

NUMERICAL ROSTER

2	BRIAN **HOYER**	QB
3	STEPHEN **GOSTKOWSKI**	K
6	RYAN **ALLEN**	P
11	JULIAN **EDELMAN**	WR
12	TOM **BRADY**	QB
13	PHILLIP **DORSETT**	WR
15	CHRIS **HOGAN**	WR
18	MATTHEW **SLATER**	WR
21	DURON **HARMON**	DB
22	OBI **MELIFONWU**	DB
23	PATRICK **CHUNG**	S
24	STEPHON **GILMORE**	CB
26	SONY **MICHEL**	RB
27	J.C. **JACKSON**	DB
28	JAMES **WHITE**	RB
29	DUKE **DAWSON JR.**	DB
30	JASON **McCOURTY**	CB
31	JONATHAN **JONES**	DB
32	DEVIN **McCOURTY**	S
34	REX **BURKHEAD**	RB
35	KEION **CROSSEN**	DB
36	BRANDON **KING**	LB
43	NATE **EBNER**	DB
46	JAMES **DEVELIN**	FB
49	JOE **CARDONA**	LS
50	RAMON **HUMBER**	LB
52	ELANDON **ROBERTS**	LB
53	KYLE **VAN NOY**	LB
54	DONT'A **HIGHTOWER**	LB
55	JOHN **SIMON**	DE
58	KEIONTA **DAVIS**	DL
59	ALBERT **McCLELLAN**	LB
60	DAVID **ANDREWS**	C
61	MARCUS **CANNON**	OL
62	JOE **THUNEY**	OL
66	JAMES **FERENTZ**	OL
68	LaADRIAN **WADDLE**	OL
69	SHAQ **MASON**	OL
70	ADAM **BUTLER**	DL
71	DANNY **SHELTON**	DL
75	TED **KARRAS**	OL
77	TRENT **BROWN**	OL
80	STEPHEN **ANDERSON**	TE
83	DWAYNE **ALLEN**	TE
84	CORDARRELLE **PATTERSON**	WR
87	ROB **GRONKOWSKI**	TE
90	MALCOM **BROWN**	DL
91	DEATRICH **WISE JR.**	DL
93	LAWRENCE **GUY**	DL
94	ADRIAN **CLAYBORN**	DE
95	DEREK **RIVERS**	DE
97	UFOMBA **KAMALU**	DL
98	TREY **FLOWERS**	DL

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LOS ANGELES RAMS
STATS/ROSTER/LINEUPS

NUMERICAL ROSTER

4	GREG **ZUERLEIN**	K
6	JOHNNY **HEKKER**	P
11	KHADAREL **HODGE**	WR
12	BRANDIN **COOKS**	WR
14	SEAN **MANNION**	QB
16	JARED **GOFF**	QB
17	ROBERT **WOODS**	WR
19	JOJO **NATSON**	WR
20	LAMARCUS **JOYNER**	S
21	AQIB **TALIB**	CB
22	MARCUS **PETERS**	CB
23	NICKELL **ROBEY-COLEMAN**	CB
24	BLAKE **COUNTESS**	DB
26	MARK **BARRON**	LB
30	TODD **GURLEY II**	RB
31	DARIOUS **WILLIAMS**	DB
32	TROY **HILL**	CB
33	JUSTIN **DAVIS**	RB
35	C.J. **ANDERSON**	RB
37	SAM **SHIELDS**	CB
41	MARQUI **CHRISTIAN**	S
42	JOHN **KELLY**	RB
43	JOHN **JOHNSON III**	S
44	JAKE **McQUAIDE**	LS
45	OGBONNIA **OKORONKWO**	OLB
49	TREVON **YOUNG**	OLB
50	SAMSON **EBUKAM**	OLB
52	RAMIK **WILSON**	LB
53	JUSTIN **LAWLER**	DL
54	BRYCE **HAGER**	LB
55	BRIAN **ALLEN**	C
56	DANTE **FOWLER JR.**	OLB
58	CORY **LITTLETON**	LB
59	MICAH **KISER**	LB
64	JAMIL **DEMBY**	OL
65	JOHN **SULLIVAN**	C
66	AUSTIN **BLYTHE**	OL
69	SEBASTIAN **JOSEPH-DAY**	DT
70	JOSEPH **NOTEBOOM**	T
76	RODGER **SAFFOLD III**	G
77	ANDREW **WHITWORTH**	T
79	ROB **HAVENSTEIN**	T
81	GERALD **EVERETT**	TE
82	JOHNNY **MUNDT**	TE
83	JOSH **REYNOLDS**	WR
89	TYLER **HIGBEE**	TE
90	MICHAEL **BROCKERS**	DL
92	TANZEL **SMART**	DT
93	NDAMUKONG **SUH**	DT
94	JOHN **FRANKLIN-MYERS**	DL
95	ETHAN **WESTBROOKS**	DL
96	MATT **LONGACRE**	OLB
99	AARON **DONALD**	DT

STATISTICAL LEADERS

PASSING	COMP-ATT	PCT	YDS	TD	INT	RTNG
JARED **GOFF**	364-561	64.9	4688	32	12	101.1
SEAN **MANNION**	2-3	66.7	23	0	0	89.6

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
TODD **GURLEY II**	256	1251	4.9	36	17
C.J. **ANDERSON**	43	299	7.0	46	2

RECEIVING	NO	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
ROBERT **WOODS**	86	1219	14.2	39	6
BRANDIN **COOKS**	80	1204	15.1	57	5
TODD **GURLEY II**	59	580	9.8	56	4
COOPER **KUPP**	40	566	14.2	70	6
GERALD **EVERETT**	33	320	9.7	40	3

DEFENSE	TACKLES	ASSISTS	TOTAL	SACKS/YARDS	PD	FF
CORY **LITTLETON**	90	35	125	4.0/43	13	0
JOHN **JOHNSON III**	81	37	118	0.0/0	11	1
LAMARCUS **JOYNER**	58	20	78	1.0/11	3	0
MARK **BARRON**	43	17	60	1.0/10	1	1
AARON **DONALD**	41	18	59	20.5/184	1	4
NDAMUKONG **SUH**	36	23	59	4.5/26	4	0

INTERCEPTIONS	NO	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
JOHN **JOHNSON III**	4	46	11.5	35	0
MARCUS **PETERS**	3	107	35.7	50	1
CORY **LITTLETON**	3	48	16.0	22	1
TROY **HILL**	2	7	3.5	7	0

KICK RETURNS	RET	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
BLAKE **COUNTESS**	17	419	24.6	40	0

PUNT RETURNS	RET	FC	AVG	LONG	TD
JOJO **NATSON**	26	10	10.8	60	0

PUNTING	NO	AVG	NET	TCHBK	IN/20	LONG
JOHNNY **HEKKER**	43	46.3	43.0	2	21	68

FIELD GOALS	TOTAL	1-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50+
GREG **ZUERLEIN**	27-31	0/0	9/9	10/10	4/6	4/6

OFFENSIVE DEPTH CHART

WR	83	**JOSH REYNOLDS**
	11	KHADAREL HODGE
TE	89	**TYLER HIGBEE**
	81	GERALD EVERETT
LT	77	**ANDREW WHITWORTH**
	70	JOSEPH NOTEBOOM
LG	76	**RODGER SAFFOLD III**
	64	JAMIL DEMBY
C	65	**JOHN SULLIVAN**
	55	BRIAN ALLEN
RG	66	**AUSTIN BLYTHE**
RT	79	**ROB HAVENSTEIN**
WR	12	**BRANDIN COOKS**
	19	JOJO NATSON
WR	17	**ROBERT WOODS**
QB	16	**JARED GOFF**
	14	SEAN MANNION
HB	30	**TODD GURLEY II**
	35	C.J. ANDERSON

DEFENSIVE DEPTH CHART

DE	90	**MICHAEL BROCKERS**
	94	JOHN FRANKLIN-MYERS
NT	93	**NDAMUKONG SUH**
	92	TANZEL SMART
DT	99	**AARON DONALD**
	95	ETHAN WESTBROOKS
WILL	56	**DANTE FOWLER JR.**
	96	MATT LONGACRE
OLB	50	**SAMSON EBUKAM**
	53	JUSTIN LAWLER
ILB	58	**CORY LITTLETON**
	54	BRYCE HAGER
ILB	26	**MARK BARRON**
	52	RAMIK WILSON
LCB	22	**MARCUS PETERS**
	23	NICKELL ROBEY-COLEMAN
SS	43	**JOHN JOHNSON III**
	24	BLAKE COUNTESS
FS	20	**LAMARCUS JOYNER**
	41	MARQUI CHRISTIAN
RCB	21	**AQIB TALIB**
	32	TROY HILL

SPECIALISTS DEPTH CHART

P	6	**JOHNNY HEKKER**
K	4	**GREG ZUERLEIN**
LS	44	**JAKE McQUAIDE**
H	6	**JOHNNY HEKKER**
PR	19	**JOJO NATSON**
KR	19	**JOJO NATSON**
	24	BLAKE COUNTESS

RAMS CRAFT A NEW L.A. STORY

BY CRAIG ELLENPORT

THE RAMS ARE BACK in the Super Bowl for the first time in 17 years … but the Los Angeles Rams? It's been 35 years since any L.A. team was in the Super Bowl, and 39 years since the only appearance in the Big Game by the Rams of Los Angeles.

After spending 21 years in St. Louis – which included the Super Bowl XXXIV championship – the Rams would love to cap their third season back in Southern California with a classic Hollywood ending.

The foundation for this potential blockbuster was built in 2017 with the hiring of Sean McVay, the youngest head coach in modern NFL history. The Rams soon discovered they had a brilliant director who could make a star out of leading man Jared Goff, backed by A-listers Aaron Donald and Todd Gurley II.

After watching the Rams win the 2017 NFC West title but lose in the Wild Card round, the producers of this saga realized they were close, so Chief Operating Officer Kevin Demoff and GM Les Snead invested in more top-flight talent during the offseason. Wide receiver Brandin Cooks and cornerbacks Marcus Peters and Aqib Talib were acquired via trade, and defensive tackle Ndamukong Suh was brought in through free agency.

Jared Goff took another big step forward in 2018, finishing fourth in the NFL with 4,688 passing yards and throwing for 32 TDs.

The Rams are all in on making 2018 their year, and the chemistry among the players has made for a captivating performance. They raced out to an 8-0 start, scoring 33-or-more points six times, and ended the regular season 13-3 to earn the NFC's No. 2 seed. They also won their second straight NFC West title – the first time that's happened since they dominated the division four decades ago.

Now that they're back in the NFL title game, the Rams look to take home their second Super Bowl victory in franchise history and the first for their fans in Los Angeles. It would only be fitting.

John Cordes/AP Images

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Kevin Terrell/AP Images

Playing in his sixth NFL season, **Robert Woods (left)** set career highs in receptions (86), receiving yards (1,219), and touchdown catches (6). He also rushed for 157 yards and a touchdown. A big-play addition to the Rams receiving corps was **Brandin Cooks (right)**. He caught 80 passes, his most since 2015, and averaged 15.1 yards per reception.

THE OFFENSE

McVay's area of expertise is offense, and the Rams have no shortage of it. They finished 2018 second in the NFL in both total offense (421.1 yards per game) and scoring (32.9 points per game), and managed 30-or-more points in 12 of their 16 regular-season contests, tied for the most in the NFL with Kansas City.

While Goff became one of the most prolific passers in the league, the Rams' attack is more balanced than that. They run about 45 percent of the time, and why not? Pro Bowl running back Gurley rushed for 1,251 yards – 4.9 yards per carry – despite missing the last two games of the season.

The 6-1, 224-pounder has the strength to run between the tackles and the speed to get outside. He's also a big part of the passing game, with 59 receptions for 580 yards this season. His 1,831 scrimmage yards were fourth-best in the NFL, and he led the league with 21 total TDs (17 rushing, four receiving).

"This offense begins and ends with Todd Gurley," says FOX Sports' Howie Long.

That said, the Rams uncovered an invaluable insurance policy late in the year. C.J. Anderson, a 1,000-yard rusher for the Broncos in 2017, had been cut by three teams this season before the Rams signed him in December. When Gurley was sidelined, all Anderson did was rush for a combined 299 yards, followed by a 123-yard effort in the Rams' playoff win over Dallas.

The passing game, meanwhile, is both efficient and explosive. Goff earned his second straight Pro Bowl selection after completing nearly 65 percent of his passes for 4,688 yards (fourth in the league) and 32 touchdowns. His 101.1 passer rating was eighth in the NFL.

Even with receiver Cooper Kupp sidelined by a season-ending injury, Goff has plenty of weapons at his disposal. Brandin Cooks and Robert Woods headline the stat sheet. They put up nearly identical numbers, combining for 166 receptions, 2,423 yards, and 11 touchdowns. Cooks is more of the deep threat, though both can score from anywhere on the field. Second-year pro Josh Reynolds chipped in with five receiving TDs.

Tight ends Gerald Everett and Tyler Higbee added to the Rams' offensive production with a combined 57 catches for 612 yards.

Central to the Rams' offensive success is a veteran line anchored by four-time Pro Bowl left tackle Andrew Whitworth, the prize free-agent signing of 2017. The Rams' explosive attack since that time might have as much to do with the former Bengal as it does with McVay, Goff, or Gurley.

2018 RAMS RESULTS (15-3)

Date	Opponent	Score	W/L
9/10	Oakland	33-13	W
9/16	ARIZONA	34-0	W
9/23	L.A. CHARGERS	35-23	W
9/27	MINNESOTA	38-31	W
10/7	Seattle	33-31	W
10/14	Denver	23-20	W
10/21	San Francisco	39-10	W
10/28	GREEN BAY	29-27	W
11/4	New Orleans	35-45	L
11/11	SEATTLE	36-31	W
11/19	KANSAS CITY	54-51	W
12/2	Detroit	30-16	W
12/9	Chicago	6-15	L
12/16	PHILADELPHIA	23-30	L
12/23	Arizona	31-9	W
12/30	SAN FRANCISCO	48-32	W
NFC Playoffs			
1/12	DALLAS	30-22	W
1/20	New Orleans	(OT) 26-23	W

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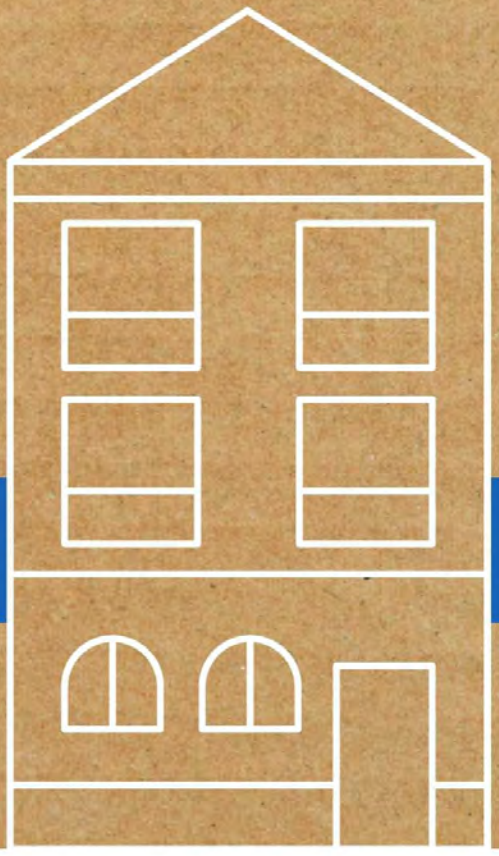

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David Durochik/AP Images

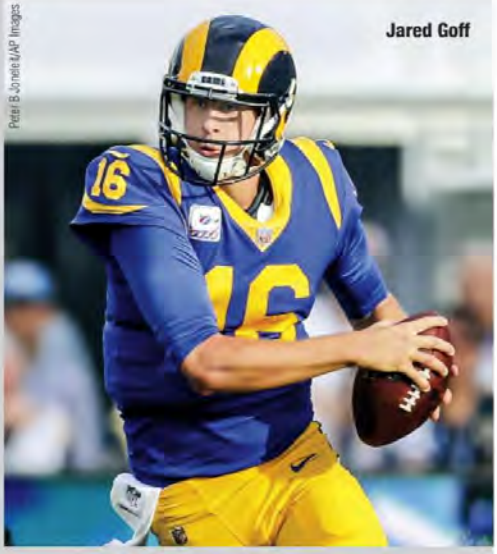
When the Rams dipped into the free-agent market last offseason, they came out with **Ndamukong Suh (left),** who fortified an already talented defensive front by contributing 59 tackles and 4.5 sacks. Safety **Lamarcus Joyner (right)** has earned a reputation for being outstanding against the run, filling his stat sheet with 78 tackles this season.

ONES WHO'VE BEEN NO. 1

Of the hundreds of quarterbacks who've played during the Super Bowl era, 26 entered pro football as the first overall pick in either the AFL or NFL draft. Nine of those QBs have won Super Bowl rings.

Jared Goff is hoping to be the 10th.

The list starts with Joe Namath, taken No. 1 by the Jets in the 1965 AFL Draft, who 50 years ago was MVP of his team's Super Bowl III victory. It's gone on to add starters Terry Bradshaw (No. 1 pick in 1970), Jim Plunkett (1971), John Elway (1983), Troy Aikman (1989), Peyton Manning (1998), and Eli Manning (2004), as well as Drew Bledsoe (1993) and David Carr (2002), who were backups on winning teams.



Jared Goff

Petre B. Jones/AP Images

However, there's been a drought in recent years. None of the eight quarterbacks drafted first overall since 2005 have raised the Lombardi Trophy.

Goff understands what a Super Bowl can mean to a quarterback's legacy. "The guys who win in the playoffs, and win late in the playoffs, and do good things in December and January, are usually the ones who are remembered," he says.

A victory on Super Bowl Sunday would allow Goff to eclipse his top-pick predecessors on one front. At age 24, he would become the youngest No. 1 to win. Ben Roethlisberger and Tom Brady are the only two other starting quarterbacks to win a Super Bowl before age 25.

Next to Whitworth on the left side of the line is veteran guard Rodger Saffold III. Whitworth, Saffold, and starting center John Sullivan have a combined 33 years of NFL experience. Right guard Austin Blythe and right tackle Rob Havenstein round out this solid unit.

THE DEFENSE

The last time Rams defensive coordinator Wade Phillips was in the Super Bowl, he held the same title with the Denver Broncos, guiding a dominant unit that smothered the Carolina Panthers in Super Bowl 50. Under Phillips, the 2018 Rams also present quite a challenge.

"People always look at stats, and I look at them, too," Phillips told SI.com. "Yeah, you want to be like we were at Denver when we won the Super Bowl. That was a special group. But I think we've got a special group here."

The stats definitely don't tell the whole story. The Rams gave up their share of yards and points, but there is significant talent on this defense. It starts, of course, with All-Pro defensive tackle Donald, perhaps the most dominant player in the NFL at any position the last two seasons.

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With his ability to collapse the pocket and close on a quarterback with lightning quickness, Donald had 20.5 sacks this season – tied for the seventh-best single-season total in NFL history. He joins Hall of Famer Lawrence Taylor as the only players to notch at least 20 sacks and play in the Super Bowl that same season. Donald hopes he can end 2018 the same way the Giants' Taylor ended his 1986 campaign: with the Vince Lombardi Trophy in hand.

Whether he lines up inside or comes around the end, Donald is the player opponents must always account for.

"We try to put him in a position to make plays and do what he does, which is attack quickly," Phillips says.

Joining Donald on the Rams' three-man line are Suh and Michael Brockers, a pair of 300-pounders who can be stout against the run.

Second-year outside linebacker Samson Ebukam displayed some big-play ability when he scored twice in the wild Week 11 win over the Chiefs, but the rock of the linebacking corps is Pro Bowler Cory Littleton on the inside.

"He's a playmaker; he's a great football player," McVay says. "He's definitely taking command and control of the defense, specifically at that Mike linebacker spot where that naturally entails a lot of communication." Littleton led the team with 125 tackles.

The Rams' defense had 10 takeaways in the final five games of the regular season, a big reason for that being the return of Talib, who missed a good chunk of the season with an ankle injury.

His status as one of the top cornerbacks in the league was borne out in this eye-opening stat: In the eight regular-season games Talib missed, the Rams allowed a passer rating of 111.6 (30th in the NFL over that span) and they gave up the most pass plays of 20-or-more yards (22). But in the eight games he played, opponents had a passer rating of 74.5 (third in the NFL) and the Rams allowed just eight TD passes while grabbing 12 interceptions.

Often regarded as the last line of defense, safeties John Johnson III and Lamarcus Joyner could be found making plays all over the field in 2018. Johnson finished second on the team and second among all NFL safeties in tackles (118), as well as posting a team-leading four interceptions. Joyner, drafted by the Rams in

LOS ANGELES RAMS ALL-TIME PLAYOFF RESULTS

(21 WINS, 25 LOSSES)

Year	Round	Opponent	Score	W/L
1945*	NFL Championship	Washington	15-14	W
1949	NFL Championship	Philadelphia	0-14	L
1950	Divisional	Chicago	24-14	W
	NFL Championship	at Cleveland	28-30	L
1951	NFL Championship	Cleveland	24-17	W
1952	Divisional	at Detroit	21-31	L
1955	NFL Championship	Cleveland	14-38	L
1967	Divisional	at Green Bay	7-28	L
1969	Divisional	at Minnesota	20-23	L
1973	NFC Divisional	at Dallas	16-27	L
1974	NFC Divisional	Washington	19-10	W
	NFC Championship	at Minnesota	10-14	L
1975	NFC Divisional	St. Louis	35-23	W
	NFC Championship	Dallas	7-37	L
1976	NFC Divisional	at Dallas	14-12	W
	NFC Championship	at Minnesota	13-24	L
1977	NFC Divisional	Minnesota	7-14	L
1978	NFC Divisional	Minnesota	34-10	W
	NFC Championship	Dallas	0-28	L
1979	NFC Divisional	at Dallas	21-19	W
	NFC Championship	at Tampa Bay	9-0	W
	Super Bowl XIV	**Pittsburgh**	**19-31**	**L**
1980	NFC Wild Card	at Dallas	13-34	L
1983	NFC Wild Card	at Dallas	24-17	W
	NFC Divisional	at Washington	7-51	L
1984	NFC Wild Card	New York Giants	13-16	L
1985	NFC Divisional	Dallas	20-0	W
	NFC Championship	at Chicago	0-24	L
1986	NFC Wild Card	at Washington	7-19	L
1988	NFC Wild Card	at Minnesota	17-28	L
1989	NFC Wild Card	at Philadelphia	21-7	W
	NFC Divisional	at New York Giants	19-13 (OT)	W
	NFC Championship	at San Francisco	3-30	L
1999**	NFC Divisional	Minnesota	49-37	W
	NFC Championship	Tampa Bay	11-6	W
	Super Bowl XXXIV	**Tennessee**	**23-16**	**W**
2000**	NFC Wild Card	at New Orleans	28-31	L
2001**	NFC Divisional	Green Bay	45-17	W
	NFC Championship	Philadelphia	29-24	W
	Super Bowl XXXVI	**New England**	**17-20**	**L**
2003**	NFC Divisional	Carolina	23-29 (OT)	L
2004**	NFC Wild Card	at Seattle	27-20	W
	NFC Divisional	at Atlanta	17-47	L
2017	NFC Wild Card	Atlanta	13-26	L
2018	NFC Divisional	Dallas	30-22	W
	NFC Championship	at New Orleans	26-23 (OT)	W

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2014, brought added veteran leadership to a youthful safeties unit and made 78 tackles.

SPECIAL TEAMS

If Johnny Hekker is busy, there's probably something wrong. The Rams punted less than any team in the NFL this season. Hekker had only 43 punts, tied for fewest among full-time punters, and averaged 46.3 yards per boot. He also might be the Rams' secret weapon: He threw four passes this season, completing two, and had another completion in the NFC title game.

While Hekker is usually not too busy, veteran kicker Greg Zuerlein is on the field plenty. In addition to handling kickoffs, Zuerlein was 27 for 31 on field goal attempts, including a perfect 19 of 19 inside the 40.

JoJo Natson was sixth in the NFL in punt returns with a 10.8-yard average.

After blocking a pair of punts in 2017, third-year linebacker and special teams ace Littleton added three more blocks to his career total – one of which resulted in a touchdown to spark a Week 3 win over the Chargers.

THE GAME PLAN

It won't take long to get a sense of how difficult it is to keep pace with the Rams on offense. Goff breaks the huddle quickly and gets his unit to the line of scrimmage with as much time on the play clock as possible, allowing McVay time to survey the defense and communicate to his QB if he finds a weakness to exploit or a blitz that might be coming.

Still, the Rams' offensive scheme is not as complicated as one might think. McVay keeps it simple. Success relies more on preparedness and execution than it does creativity.

So while the offense will score points, the defense will be charged with staying aggressive and slowing down the opponent's running game. The Rams can afford to do that with the talent they have in the secondary that prevents big plays.

With McVay orchestrating his precision offense and the veteran Phillips overseeing the defense, the Rams have the right combination in place to direct this Hollywood blockbuster. A solid performance from their star-studded cast could bring the Lombardi Trophy back to Los Angeles for a red-carpet celebration.

Craig Ellenport has covered the NFL for 25 years and is the editor-in-chief of headcoachranking.com.

NFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

Los Angeles Rams 26
NEW ORLEANS 23 (OT)

A HUGE DEFENSIVE PLAY early in overtime set up Greg Zuerlein's game-winning 57-yard field goal as the Rams stunned the Saints, 26-23, to advance to the Super Bowl for the fourth time in franchise history and the first since their return to Los Angeles.

The Saints won the OT coin toss, but turned the ball over four plays later when Rams linebacker Donte Fowler Jr. hit QB Drew Brees' arm as he threw downfield. The altered pass landed in the arms of safety John Johnson III near midfield. The Rams then needed just one first down to set up Zuerlein, whose kick made the Rams the first road team to win a conference title game in six years.

Zuerlein had forced the extra session with a 48-yard field goal in the final seconds of regulation.

New Orleans had the upper hand early on, scoring on its first three possessions, but the Rams limited the damage by keeping two of those scores to Wil Lutz field goals. Zuerlein then put Los Angeles on the board with a 36-yard field goal, and Todd Gurley II followed with a six-yard touchdown run just before the half to draw the Rams to within 13-10.

The teams traded touchdowns in the third quarter – the Saints reaching paydirt on a two-yard Brees pass to Taysom Hill, and the Rams answering when QB Jared Goff hit tight end Tyler Higbee from one yard out.

A wild final few minutes preceded the game-ending drama. First, the Rams drew even when they reached the Saints 1-yard line but had to settle for a 24-yard Zuerlein field goal. On the Saints' next possession, a 43-yard Brees-to-Ted Ginn Jr. pass brought the ball deep into Los Angeles territory. Yet the drive stalled, and though Lutz's 31-yard field goal put the hosts back on top with 1:45 to play, it was enough time for Goff to drive the Rams 45 yards for the field goal that sent the game into overtime.

Goff finished the day completing 25 of 40 passes for 297 yards, with Brandin Cooks catching a team-best seven of those throws for 107 yards. Cory Littleton led the Rams' defensive efforts with 12 tackles.

MERCEDES-BENZ SUPERDOME
New Orleans, La. Jan. 20, 2019

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	F
L.A. Rams	0	10	7	6	3	26
New Orleans	13	0	7	3	0	23

1st Quarter
NO Lutz 37 FG, 4:56
NO Lutz 29 FG, 7:54
NO Griffin 5 pass from Brees (Lutz kick), 13:25

2nd Quarter
LAR Zuerlein 36 FG, 5:15
LAR Gurley 6 run (Zuerlein kick), 14:37

3rd Quarter
NO T. Hill 2 pass from Brees (Lutz kick), 6:26
LAR Higbee 1 pass from Goff (Zuerlein kick), 11:54

4th Quarter
LAR Zuerlein 24 FG, 9:57
NO Lutz 31 FG, 13:19
LAR Zuerlein 48 FG, 14:45

Overtime
LAR Zuerlein 57 FG, 3:17

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E. STANLEY KROENKE Owner/Chairman

E. STANLEY KROENKE's journey to bring professional football to Los Angeles culminated on Jan. 12, 2016, when National Football League owners ratified his proposal to return the Rams to Southern California.

"The Rams are returning to their home of Los Angeles with an incredible stadium complex that will exceed all expectations of our fans in the entertainment capital of the world," said NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell in 2016. "We believe this will be transformational, not just for the Rams, not just for the Los Angeles community, but for the NFL."

Ten years after NFL owners approved Kroenke to assume sole ownership of the franchise in 2010, he will celebrate the grand opening of his Los Angeles Stadium & Entertainment District at Hollywood Park – a 298-acre development with a 70,240-seat stadium as its crown jewel.

The state-of-the-art stadium will rise from nearly 100 feet below ground on the former site of the Hollywood Park Racetrack and will serve as the home to the Los Angeles Rams, Los Angeles Chargers, and NFL Media. Under Kroenke's leadership, philanthropic activities will be essential to the mission of the L.A. Stadium & Entertainment District. Project developers are committed to positively impacting the Greater Los Angeles Region and the City of Inglewood through world-class entertainment, outreach activities, the creation of new jobs, and local revenues.

Regarded as one of the world's leading sports proprietors, Kroenke's teams have won titles in the NFL, NHL, MLS, and the National Lacrosse League. His sports holdings include serving as the majority shareholder of London's Arsenal FC (Barclays English Premier League), which won its 13th FA Cup in 2017. From 2000-2014, Kroenke owned the NBA's Denver Nuggets and the NHL's Colorado Avalanche, which are now a part of a family trust. Kroenke's Denver-based company, Kroenke Sports & Entertainment (KSE), owns the Colorado Rapids of Major League Soccer and the Colorado Mammoth of the National Lacrosse League. Kroenke also owns Altitude Sports & Entertainment, which produces Rams preseason games.

Kroenke currently serves on the NFL's Broadcast Committee and has worked on multiple league committees, including the NFL's Workplace Diversity Committee. He also worked alongside his fellow owners to reach a new Collective Bargaining Agreement with the NFL Players Association in 2011.

Rams Owner/Chairman E. Stanley Kroenke presents Sean McVay with a game ball following the head coach's 2017 debut, a 46-9 win over the Colts.

E. Stanley Kroenke, named after baseball legends Enos Slaughter and Stan Musial, was born in Cole Camp, Mo., and grew up in Mora, Mo. Kroenke and his wife, Ann, have a daughter, Whitney, and a son, Josh, Vice Chairman of KSE and KSE UK. In 2017, Kroenke and Josh became owners of the Los Angeles Gladiators, an eSports franchise of the Overwatch League.

Kroenke holds undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of Missouri and was enshrined into the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame in 2009.

LOS ANGELES RAMS TEAM OFFICIALS

E. STANLEY KROENKE
Owner/Chairman

KEVIN DEMOFF
Chief Operating Officer

LES SNEAD
General Manager

JAMIE REIGLE
Executive Vice President, Business Operations

TONY PASTOORS
Vice President, Football and Business Administration

BRIAN XANDERS
Senior Personnel Executive

TAYLOR MORTON
Senior Personnel Advisor

ARTIS TWYMAN
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REGGIE SCOTT
Senior Director, Sports Medicine and Performance

BRAD HOLMES
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JW JORDAN
Director, Draft Management

BRUCE WARWICK
Director, Operations/Facilities

JACQUES McCLENDON
Director, Player Engagement

RAY AGNEW
Director, Pro Personnel

BYRON CUNNINGHAM
Director, Rehabilitation/ Assistant Athletic Trainer

DAVE LOVE
Director, Security

LARRY CLERICO
Director, Video

JIM LAKE
Head Equipment Manager

JOEY BLAKE
Nutritionist

TED MONAGO
Assistant Director, College Scouting

MARTY BARRETT
National Scout

JAMES GLADSTONE
Senior Assistant to the General Manager/Player Personnel Coordinator

STEVE MILLER
Special Assistant/Security

RONALEE ZARATE-BAYANI
Chief Marketing Officer

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Chief Technology Officer

ORACIO GALINDO
Head of Employee Experience

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SEAN McVAY Head Coach

In Jan. 2017, **SEAN McVAY** was named head coach of the Rams, and at age 30, became the youngest coach in modern NFL history.

In his second season at the helm, McVay led the Rams to a 13-3 record. It marked only the third time that the Rams have registered at least 13 wins in a season – and the first since 2001. Los Angeles also earned consecutive NFC West titles for the first time in nearly four decades (1973-79).

In 2017, his first year at the helm, McVay helped the Rams rise from the 32nd-ranked scoring team to No. 1, marking the first time in league history a team has gone from last to first in scoring. The Rams finished 11-5 and won their first NFC West title since the 2003 season. McVay was named 2017 AP Coach of the Year, and eight of his players were selected to the Pro Bowl, the most in a season for the franchise since the 1999 campaign.

Before joining the Rams, McVay spent seven seasons with the Washington Redskins, including three as their offensive coordinator (2014-16). He joined the Redskins in 2010 after an undefeated regular season with the Florida Tuskers of the United Football League. He originally entered the NFL as an offensive assistant with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in 2008.

McVay graduated from Miami University (Ohio), where he played wide receiver from 2004-07 and earned Miami's Scholar-Athlete Award as a senior.

ASSISTANT COACHES

JOE BARRY ..... Assistant Head Coach/Linebackers
THAD BOGARDUS ..... Defensive Quality Control
LIAM COEN ..... Assistant Wide Receivers Coach
MATT DANIELS ..... Assistant Special Teams Coach
ANDY DICKERSON ..... Assistant Offensive Line Coach
EJIRO EVERO ..... Safeties Coach
JOHN FASSEL ..... Special Teams Coordinator
JEDD FISCH ..... Senior Offensive Assistant
EDWARD GRAYER ..... Assistant Strength and Conditioning Coach
BILL JOHNSON ..... Defensive Line Coach
AARON KROMER ..... Run Game Coordinator
ZAK KROMER ..... Offensive Quality Control
BILL NAYES ..... Assistant to the Head Coach
FERNANDO NORIEGA ..... Assistant Strength and Conditioning
SKIP PEETE ..... Running Backs Coach
WADE PHILLIPS ..... Defensive Coordinator
AUBREY PLEASANT ..... Cornerbacks Coach
TED RATH ..... Dir. of Strength Training and Performance
CHRIS SHULA ..... Assistant Linebackers Coach
ZAC TAYLOR ..... Quarterbacks Coach
SHANE WALDRON ..... Pass Game Coordinator
DUSTIN WOODS ..... Assistant Strength and Conditioning Coach
ERIC YARBER ..... Wide Receivers Coach

LOS ANGELES RAMS ALPHABETICAL ROSTER

NO	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	BIRTH DATE	NFL EXP	COLLEGE	HOW ACQUIRED
55	**Allen**, Brian	C	6-2	303	10/11/95	R	Michigan State	D4a '18
35	**Anderson**, C.J.	RB	5-8	225	2/10/91	6	California	FA '18
26	**Barron**, Mark	LB	6-2	230	10/27/89	7	Alabama	T (TB) '14
66	**Blythe**, Austin	OL	6-3	298	6/16/92	3	Iowa	W (IND) '17
90	**Brockers**, Michael	DL	6-5	305	12/21/90	7	LSU	D1 '12
41	**Christian**, Marqui	S	5-11	207	10/27/94	3	Midwestern State	W (AZ) '16
12	**Cooks**, Brandin	WR	5-10	183	9/25/93	5	Oregon State	T (NE) '18
24	**Countess**, Blake	DB	5-10	191	8/8/93	3	Auburn	FA '16
33	**Davis**, Justin	RB	6-1	199	11/11/95	2	Southern California	FA '17
64	**Demby**, Jamil	OL	6-5	321	6/20/96	R	Maine	D6b '18
99	**Donald**, Aaron	DT	6-1	280	5/23/91	5	Pittsburgh	D1b '14
50	**Ebukam**, Samson	OLB	6-3	245	5/9/95	2	Eastern Washington	D4b '17
81	**Everett**, Gerald	TE	6-3	240	6/25/94	2	South Alabama	D2 '17
56	**Fowler Jr.**, Dante	OLB	6-3	255	8/3/94	4	Florida	T (JAX) '18
94	**Franklin-Myers**, John	DL	6-4	288	9/26/96	R	Stephen F. Austin	D4b '18
16	**Goff**, Jared	QB	6-4	222	10/14/94	3	California	D1 '16
30	**Gurley II**, Todd	RB	6-1	224	8/3/94	4	Georgia	D1 '15
54	**Hager**, Bryce	LB	6-1	237	5/4/92	4	Baylor	D7a '15
79	**Havenstein**, Rob	T	6-8	330	5/13/92	4	Wisconsin	D2 '15
6	**Hekker**, Johnny	P	6-5	241	2/8/90	7	Oregon State	FA '12
89	**Higbee**, Tyler	TE	6-6	255	1/1/93	3	Western Kentucky	D4a '16
32	**Hill**, Troy	CB	5-11	183	8/29/91	4	Oregon	W (NE) - '15
11	**Hodge**, KhaDarel	WR	6-2	205	1/3/95	R	Prairie View A&M	FA '18
43	**Johnson III**, John	S	6-0	209	12/19/95	2	Boston College	D3b '17
69	**Joseph-Day**, Sebastian	DT	6-4	310	3/21/95	R	Rutgers	D6c '18
20	**Joyner**, Lamarcus	S	5-8	191	11/27/90	5	Florida State	D2 '14
42	**Kelly**, John	RB	5-10	205	10/4/96	R	Tennessee	D6a '18
59	**Kiser**, Micah	LB	6-0	244	1/25/95	R	Virginia	D5a '18
53	**Lawler**, Justin	DL	6-4	265	12/23/94	R	SMU	D7b '18
58	**Littleton**, Cory	LB	6-3	228	11/18/93	3	Washington	FA '16
96	**Longacre**, Matt	OLB	6-3	265	9/21/91	4	NW Missouri State	FA '15
14	**Mannion**, Sean	QB	6-6	223	4/25/92	4	Oregon State	D3b '15
44	**McQuaide**, Jake	LS	6-2	235	12/7/87	8	Ohio State	FA '11
82	**Mundt**, Johnny	TE	6-4	233	11/23/94	1	Oregon	FA '17
19	**Natson**, JoJo	WR	5-7	153	2/1/94	2	Akron	FA '18
70	**Noteboom**, Joseph	T	6-5	321	6/19/95	R	Texas Christian	D3 '18
45	**Okoronkwo**, Ogbonnia	OLB	6-2	253	4/24/95	R	Oklahoma	D5b '18
22	**Peters**, Marcus	CB	6-0	195	1/9/93	4	Washington	T (KC) '18
83	**Reynolds**, Josh	WR	6-3	196	2/16/95	2	Texas A&M	D4a '17
23	**Robey-Coleman**, Nickell	CB	5-8	180	1/17/92	6	Southern California	FA '17
76	**Saffold III**, Rodger	G	6-5	323	6/6/88	9	Indiana	D2 '10
37	**Shields**, Sam	CB	5-11	178	12/8/87	7	Miami	FA '18
92	**Smart**, Tanzel	DT	6-1	295	11/6/94	2	Tulane	D6a '17
93	**Suh**, Ndamukong	DT	6-4	313	1/6/87	9	Nebraska	FA '18
65	**Sullivan**, John	C	6-4	312	8/8/85	11	Notre Dame	FA '17
21	**Talib**, Aqib	CB	6-1	209	2/13/86	11	Kansas	T (DEN) '18
95	**Westbrooks**, Ethan	DL	6-4	287	11/15/90	5	West Texas A&M	FA '14
77	**Whitworth**, Andrew	T	6-7	330	12/12/81	13	LSU	FA '17
31	**Williams**, Darious	DB	5-9	187	3/15/93	R	Alabama-Birmingham	W (BAL) '18
52	**Wilson**, Ramik	LB	6-2	238	8/19/92	4	Georgia	FA '18
17	**Woods**, Robert	WR	6-0	195	4/10/92	6	Southern California	FA '17
49	**Young**, Trevon	OLB	6-4	259	4/1/95	R	Louisville	D6d '18
4	**Zuerlein**, Greg	K	6-0	191	12/27/87	7	Missouri Western	D6 '12

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NFC CHAMPIONS

LOS ANGELES RAMS

Brian Allen (55)
Center

C.J. Anderson (35)
Running Back

Mark Barron (26)
Linebacker

Austin Blythe (66)
Offensive Lineman

Michael Brockers (90)
Defensive Lineman

Marqui Christian (41)
Safety

Brandin Cooks (12)
Wide Receiver

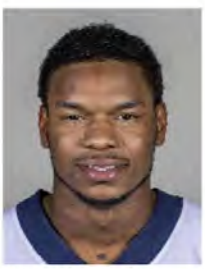
Blake Countess (24)
Defensive Back

Justin Davis (33)
Running Back

Jamil Demby (64)
Offensive Lineman

Aaron Donald (99)
Defensive Tackle

Samson Ebukam (50)
Outside Linebacker



Gerald Everett (81)
Tight End

Dante Fowler Jr. (56)
Outside Linebacker

John Franklin-Myers (94)
Defensive Lineman

Jared Goff (16)
Quarterback

Todd Gurley II (30)
Running Back

Bryce Hager (54)
Linebacker

Rob Havenstein (79)
Tackle

Johnny Hekker (6)
Punter

Tyler Higbee (89)
Tight End

Troy Hill (32)
Cornerback

KhaDarel Hodge (11)
Wide Receiver

John Johnson III (43)
Safety

Sebastian Joseph-Day (69)
Defensive Tackle

Lamarcus Joyner (20)
Safety

John Kelly (42)
Running Back

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RATING PENDING
RP
ESRB
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PS4
PC
NINTENDO SWITCH.
XBOX ONE
TT games
WB GAMES

NFC CHAMPIONS

Micah Kiser (59)
Linebacker

Justin Lawler (53)
Defensive Lineman

Cory Littleton (58)
Linebacker

Matt Longacre (96)
Outside Linebacker

Sean Mannion (14)
Quarterback

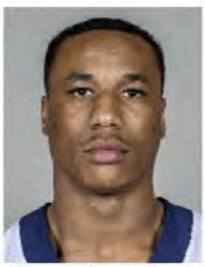
Jake McQuaide (44)
Long Snapper

Johnny Mundt (82)
Tight End

JoJo Natson (19)
Wide Receiver

Joseph Noteboom (70)
Tackle

Ogbonnia Okoronkwo (45)
Outside Linebacker



Marcus Peters (22)
Cornerback

Josh Reynolds (83)
Wide Receiver

Nickell Robey-Coleman (23)
Cornerback

Rodger Saffold III (76)
Guard

Sam Shields (37)
Cornerback

Tanzel Smart (92)
Defensive Tackle

Ndamukong Suh (93)
Defensive Tackle

John Sullivan (65)
Center

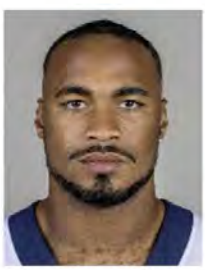
Aqib Talib (21)
Cornerback

Ethan Westbrooks (95)
Defensive Lineman

Andrew Whitworth (77)
Tackle

Darious Williams (31)
Defensive Back

Ramik Wilson (52)
Linebacker



Robert Woods (17)
Wide Receiver

Trevon Young (49)
Outside Linebacker

Greg Zuerlein (4)
Kicker

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CFC
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GIVE GENEROUSLY, GIVE TODAY
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will die from breast cancer

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2019 A 220 Sedan shown in Jupiter Red paint with optional equipment.

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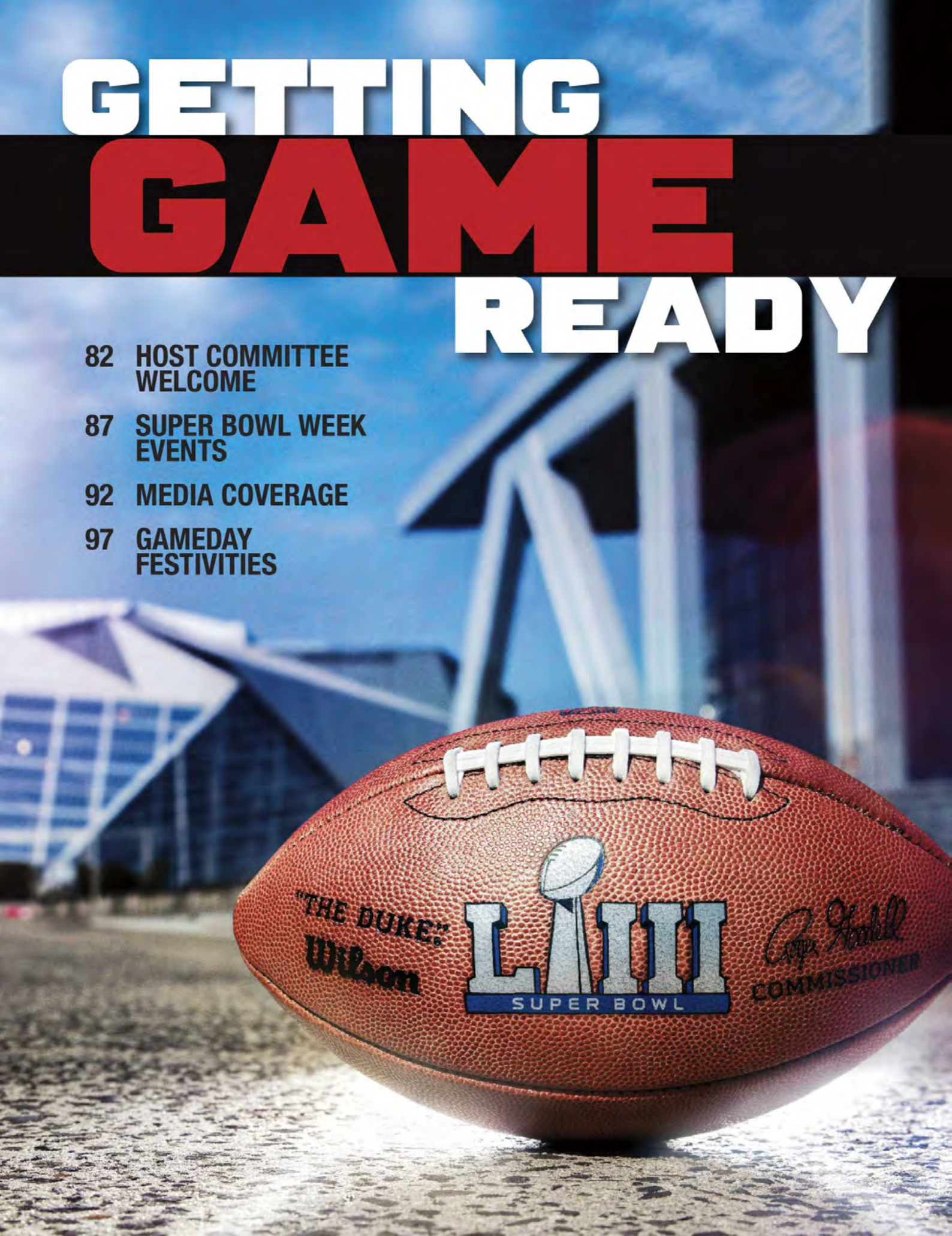
GETTING GAME READY

82 HOST COMMITTEE WELCOME

87 SUPER BOWL WEEK EVENTS

92 MEDIA COVERAGE

97 GAMEDAY FESTIVITIES



WELCOME TO ATLANTA

Dear Super Bowl Guests,

On behalf of Metro Atlanta, it is our pleasure to welcome you to Super Bowl LIII! We are excited Atlanta was selected to host this marquee event for the third time in its history, and the first time at the state-of-the-art Mercedes-Benz Stadium.

Visiting fans and residents alike can expect a week full of activities, concerts, and experiences, all within a convenient, walkable downtown footprint. In addition to the official Super Bowl LIII ancillary events, be sure to take advantage of all that Atlanta offers. From our world-class attractions to well-renowned dining options, Atlanta has something for every fan.

Please download the Super Bowl LIII – Fan Mobile Pass app to be sure you never miss any of the exciting events during the week. Additionally, we invite you to interact with us on social media at @ATLSuperBowl53 on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, and by using the hashtags #ATLSB53 and #SBLIII.

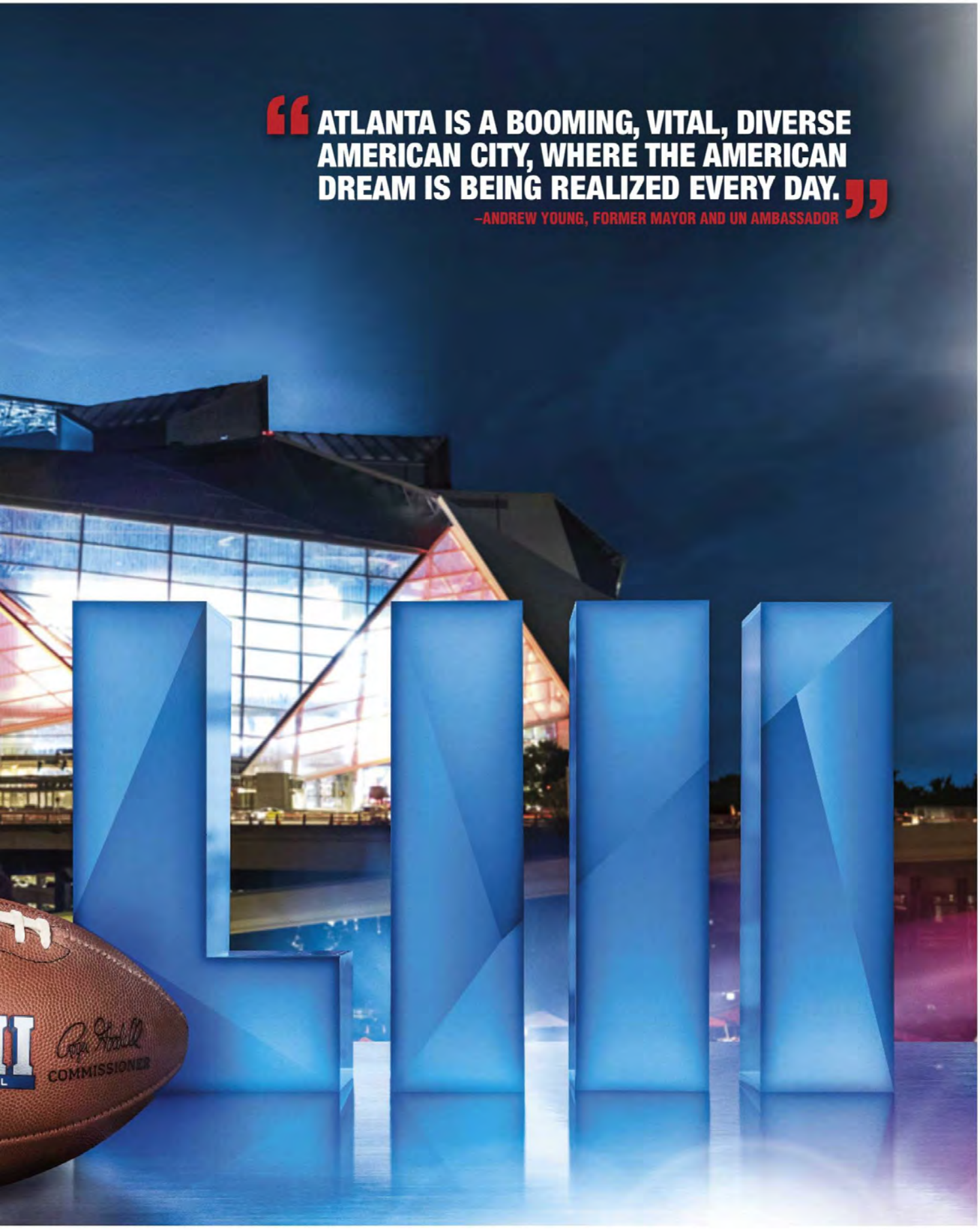
The Atlanta Super Bowl Host Committee would like to thank our partners in the community for their generous support and the 10,000 dedicated Team ATL volunteers for their hard work in making this event a reality.

We hope you enjoy your time in Atlanta and look forward to providing a one-of-a-kind experience for the teams, media, and football fans from around the world.

Sincerely,

Carl Adkins
Executive Director,
Atlanta Super Bowl Host Committee

ATLANTA
HOST TO SUPER BOWL LIII


"ATLANTA IS A BOOMING, VITAL, DIVERSE AMERICAN CITY, WHERE THE AMERICAN DREAM IS BEING REALIZED EVERY DAY."
–ANDREW YOUNG, FORMER MAYOR AND UN AMBASSADOR
LIII
COMMISSIONER

Legacy 53 Ensures a Lasting Footprint

THE ATLANTA SUPER BOWL HOST COMMITTEE EXISTS, in part, to create a lasting legacy for the city of Atlanta. This defined mission, entitled *Legacy 53*, is a multiplatform approach consisting of capital improvement, youth programs, civic and social engagement, local business support, and environmental stewardship. Atlanta's focus is on celebrating and elevating Atlanta communities through a variety of initiatives, impacting both the hearts and minds of our neighbors and the neighborhoods we call home.

The foundation of *Legacy 53* is built on five pillars: Business Connect, a Capital Improvement Project, Civil Rights and Social Justice, Sustainability, and Youth Engagement. Each of these pillars is guided by communities of influential local leaders and experts and includes programs with partners in the community.

Business Connect: The Host Committee extended the NFL's supplier diversity program to the Metro Atlanta area. The Super Bowl LIII Business Connect program helped identify and connect qualified, local minority-, woman-, veteran-, and LGBT-owned businesses to the NFL and its vendors in order to compete for contracting opportunities surrounding Super Bowl LIII. This program also provided networking, educational, and other business development resources to prepare participating local companies for future contract opportunities. The mission is to bring event production dollars to Atlanta while elevating diverse, locally owned businesses. More than 225 local businesses participated in the program.

Capital Improvement Project: The Host Committee, NFL Foundation, and The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation have teamed up to fund a major capital improvement project, benefiting John F. Kennedy Park in Atlanta's historic Westside neighborhood. This investment is a commitment to fostering play and healthy lifestyles and will be a lasting legacy to our community.

Civil Rights and Social Justice: Atlanta is the historic home of the civil rights movement and, as such, the Host Committee is proud to recognize the rich history and continued leadership of our city in areas of human rights. The vision for this pillar was established through a diverse committee of leaders and experts. Programs included a conversation series as well as a public art project involving community-driven installations across Atlanta. With partners including WonderRoot, the Center for Civil and Human Rights, and The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation, the aim has been to connect deeply with our communities and inspire constructive dialogue surrounding social issues.

Sustainability: Environmental stewardship has been major focus for the NFL and the Host Committee in each Super Bowl city over the past 25 years. The goal for Atlanta is to maximize waste diversion on game day as well as during surrounding Super Bowl events, reduce our environmental impact through the use of renewable energy credits, optimize reclamation of Super Bowl materials for reuse, engage our local communities in repurposing and recycling, and leave a lasting legacy in Atlanta's neighborhoods through planting projects in our urban forest program. Atlanta received the Golden Shovel – a symbol of Super Bowl sustainability – from Minneapolis in May 2018 and symbolically put it to use in September during our first tree-planting event. Leading up to the game, there have been a number of projects planned to benefit the Atlanta community.

Youth Engagement: The Host Committee, in partnership with the NFL and the Atlanta Falcons, built a collection of programs geared toward Atlanta's youth. These programs emphasized sport and physical activity as an essential component of development, as well as support for healthy lifestyle habits. Working with community partner GENYOUth, the Host Committee focused on nutrition for children. School breakfast grants were delivered in the metro-Atlanta area to help address hunger, food insecurity, and academic achievement.

To learn more, visit **atlsuperbowl53.com/legacy53**.

Atlanta Super Bowl Host Committee volunteers typified the spirit and pride associated with the Super Bowl's return to the city for the first time since 2000. They were deeply involved with the *Legacy 53* initiative that connected the spectacle of the big game with Atlanta's communities. The Team ATL volunteer captain was former Falcon Warrick Dunn, shown at right with two team members.

GO IN SEARCH OF
YOUR BRIGHTEST FUTURE

People always say "Go Big or Go Home." At **Emory University's Goizueta Business School**, we completely agree.

Our faculty believe in the power of thinking differently and see the value in challenging the status quo.

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NFL SHOP at SUPER BOWL

presented by VISA

MAIN STORE

• **Georgia World Congress Center Hall B**
(lobby of main entrance, street level)
285 Andrew Young International Blvd NW
Dates: Jan. 26 – Feb. 3

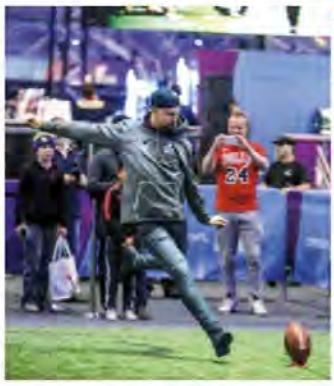
The main store will feature most core Super Bowl products as well as specialty items, including customizable socks and tees. The assortment will also include all 32 NFL teams.

SATELLITE STORES

• **Georgia World Congress Center Hall B**
(inside Super Bowl Experience, ticket required)
285 Andrew Young International Blvd NW
Dates: Jan. 26 – Feb. 3

This shop will be the main hub of many activations, such as player appearances, concerts, and customization. It will feature a wide selection of exclusive products, including winter hats, limited edition red footballs, watches, Build-A-Bear, and more. It will also include Nike and New Era apparel and products for all 32 NFL teams.

• More than two dozen additional NFL Shop satellite stores are located throughout Atlanta. Go to **nfl.com/sbnflshop** for the complete list.



Super Bowl Experience

LIII EXPERIENCE presented by HYUNDAI

SUPER BOWL EXPERIENCE DRIVEN BY HYUNDAI is the NFL's interactive theme park celebrating Super Bowl LIII from Saturday, Jan. 26, through Saturday, Feb. 2, in the Georgia World Congress Center (Building B).

At the Super Bowl Experience, you can participate in immersive exhibits and interactive games, take photos with the Vince Lombardi Trophy, collect free NFL player and Legend autographs, get an up-close look at the collection of all 52 Super Bowl rings, and more.

The most exciting, continuous event surrounding Super Bowl LIII also gives you the chance to train like an NFL player at Combine Corner with the 3-Cone Drill, 40-Yard Dash, and the Broad Jump! After testing your skills on the field, see what happens off the field with behind-the-scenes access to NFL Network player and celebrity interviews at the Bridgestone Fan Gallery (located in Building A at the Georgia World Congress Center).

Commemorate your fun experience with a stop by NFL Shop at Super Bowl presented by Visa, home of the largest collection of Super Bowl LIII merchandise! Share your experiences using **#SBLIII**.

For exclusive access to Super Bowl Experience and the opportunity to win tickets to Super Bowl LIII, register for Fan Mobile Pass by visiting **nfl.com/sbapp**.

SUPER BOWL EXPERIENCE TICKETS & HOURS

ONLINE/BOX OFFICE

Tickets for the Super Bowl Experience are available at **nfl.com/sbxonsale**. Tickets are also available for purchase at the box office located inside Building B of the Georgia World Congress Center. The box office will close two hours prior to event closing time each day.

SBXTRA

SBXTRA allows fans priority access to their favorite Super Bowl Experience attractions ALL DAY, beginning at the time slot that you purchased. Look for the SBXTRA sign at the following attractions:

- **Autograph Stage**
  (1 autograph for each SBXTRA purchase)
- **Vince Lombardi Trophy**
  (1 photo for each SBXTRA purchase)
- **Interactive Games** (unlimited access)
- **NFL PLAY Football Clinic Field** (unlimited access)

Hours of Operation

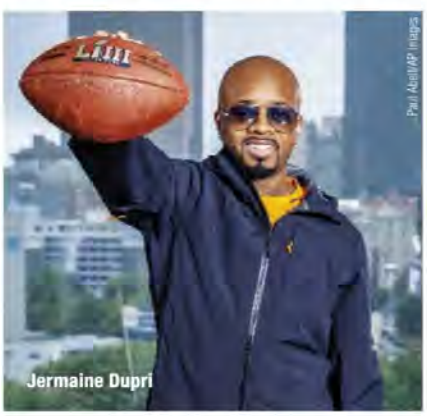
Saturday, Jan. 26	10 a.m. – 10 p.m.
Sunday, Jan. 27	10 a.m. – 8 p.m.
Monday, Jan. 28	3 p.m. – 8 p.m.
Tuesday, Jan. 29	3 p.m. – 8 p.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 30	3 p.m. – 10 p.m.
Thursday, Jan. 31	3 p.m. – 10 p.m.
Friday, Feb. 1	10 a.m. – 10 p.m.
Saturday, Feb. 2	10 a.m. – 10 p.m.

Super Bowl LIVE presented by Verizon

CENTENNIAL OLYMPIC PARK IN DOWNTOWN ATLANTA is the site of Super Bowl LIVE, the free, large-scale fan festival leading up to Super Bowl LIII. It is open Jan. 26-28 and again from Jan. 31-Feb. 2, and includes interactive attractions, opportunities to meet current and former NFL standouts, and music on the Verizon Up Stage.

GRAMMY Award-winning producer Jermaine Dupri is serving as the event's music producer and has shows set throughout the week. Confirmed performers include Hip Hop artists Goodie Mob, Waka Flocka, K Camp, Ying Yang Twins, and Monica, country music star Craig Campbell, and indie rock and pop group Hero The Band.

"We are excited to welcome renowned talent from a variety of musical genres to Super Bowl LIVE presented by Verizon," said Brett Daniels, chief operating officer of the Atlanta Super Bowl Host Committee. "With daily concerts, festivities, and engaging partner activations, Super Bowl LIVE will give Atlanta locals and visitors alike a unique and free opportunity to be a part of Super Bowl LIII."


Jermaine Dupri

Paul Abell/AP Images

At Super Bowl LIVE, Hyundai invites guests to its "Fan Jam" activation, with opportunities to compete in games against friends and family, as well as the chance to win Super Bowl tickets.

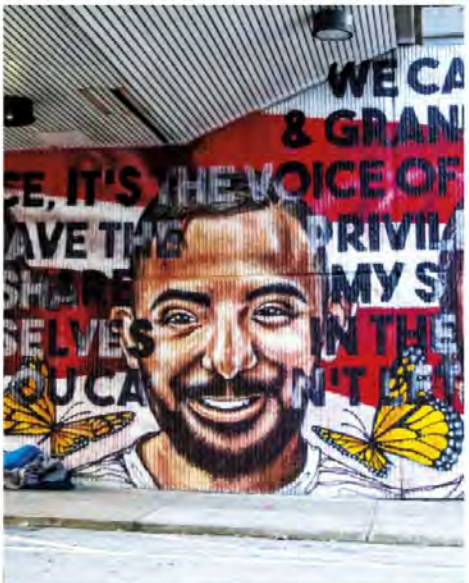
Frito-Lay and Tostitos, the Official Chip & Dip of the NFL, have a Tostitos Cantina, where NFL Legends are stopping by to compete in various challenges, including a nacho-making competition, while meeting and greeting fans.

Guests can also experience the Built Ford Tough VR Drive-In, which features a virtual reality fan journey to Atlanta. Guests can hop into a Ford F-150, Super Duty, or new Ford Ranger, strap on a pair of VR goggles, and head to Atlanta from a variety of locations around the country. Guests will also have opportunities to meet NFL players and Legends and win a NFLShop.com gift card.

Verizon is engaging fans with the stageside Verizon Up Members Lounge, where NFL players and Legends are making appearances throughout the week. In addition, the Verizon Experience offers consumers a peek into the future of 5G and how it will change their fan experience through technology, both in their homes and their home stadium. Yahoo Sports is creating original content and host interviews with NFL talent from the Verizon Experience.

In addition to the activations, Super Bowl LIVE includes ESPN, NFL Network, and 11Alive Atlanta, each of which is broadcasting from the event.

Please visit **atlsuperbowl53.com/superbowllive** for more details.



IMAGES OF JUSTICE

Fans in Atlanta for Super Bowl LIII can see change at nearly every corner. It's the result of WonderRoot and the Atlanta Super Bowl Host Committee teaming up for "Off the Wall," an initiative featuring a series of 30 murals placed throughout the city.

Created by some of the city's most renowned and up-and-coming artists, these murals share the stories and ideas present in Atlanta's pursuit of civil rights, human rights, and a more equitable future for its residents.

To learn more, visit **offthewallatl.org**.

MEDIA IN ACTION

The Super Bowl Media Center presented by Microsoft, home of the Bridgestone Fan Gallery, is being held at the Georgia World Congress Center and is open to the public Monday, Jan. 28, through Friday, Feb. 1. There, fans can watch media members in action at the Fan Gallery and soak up the energy that will constantly be swarming around the Media Center throughout Super Bowl LIII.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Monday, Jan. 28	3 p.m. – 6 p.m.
Tuesday, Jan. 29	3 p.m. – 6 p.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 30	3 p.m. – 8 p.m.
Thursday, Jan. 31	4 p.m. – 8 p.m.
Friday, Feb. 1	10 a.m. – 8 p.m.

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For more information or to make an appointment, visit us online at ***gwinnettmedicalcenter.org/gameon*** or call 678-737-4484.

The Eagles' Lane Johnson speaks to the media at Super Bowl Opening Night in Minneapolis.

J.J. Watt accepts the 2017 Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award at last year's *NFL Honors* show.

Ludacris will preform Jan. 31 at the Bud Light Music Fest.

WATCH
SUPER BOWL OPENING NIGHT

January 28 • State Farm Arena • 5:30 p.m.

Super Bowl Opening Night Fueled by Gatorade is the national kickoff for Super Bowl LIII festivities. Fans get to be a part of the action as Super Bowl players and coaches address the nation for the first time live from State Farm Arena in Atlanta. Those in attendance get to celebrate with cheerleaders and team mascots, collect free autographs from NFL players and Legends, immerse themselves in the media frenzy from up-close viewing platforms, have unique photo opportunities, and more. Doors open at 5:30 p.m., with the NFC team interview session at 7 p.m., followed by the AFC team interview session at 9 p.m. NFL Network will provide TV coverage. A limited number of tickets are available for purchase. Visit **nfl.com/openingnightonsale** for more details.

NFL HONORS

Feb. 2 • Fox Theater • 9 p.m. (ET)

NFL Honors, which debuted in Indianapolis in 2012, is the National Football League's annual awards show recognizing the NFL's best players, performances, and plays from the current season. The two-hour prime-time awards special airs nationally on Feb. 2, the eve of Super Bowl LIII, at 9 p.m. (ET and PT) on CBS. *NFL Honors* will be taped earlier that evening at the Fox Theater (5 p.m.- 7 p.m.). The 2019 Pro Football Hall of Fame class will be introduced for the first time and the NFL and the Associated Press will announce their annual accolades, with the winners on hand to accept their awards.

LISTEN
SUPER BOWL GOSPEL CELEBRATION

Jan. 31 • Atlanta Symphony Hall • 7 p.m.

The 20th annual Super Bowl Gospel Celebration will be a star-studded music jubilation that brings together faith and football. NFL players, top Gospel, Contemporary, Christian, and mainstream GRAMMY Award-winning artists, and other special guests will appear on one stage to deliver an evening of uplifting music and inspirational messages. Performers this year include Tasha Cobbs Leonard, Kirk Franklin, Rickey Smiley, and The Winans. Tickets are available at **ticketmaster.com**. Learn more about this year's show at **superbowlgospel.com**. Highlights of the show will be broadcast on BET on Saturday, Feb. 2, starting at 9 p.m.

BUD LIGHT MUSIC FEST

Jan. 31 - Feb. 2 • State Farm Arena • 9 p.m.

Atlanta's State Farm Arena is the site of the Bud Light Super Bowl LIII Music Fest, delivering three nights of diverse and dynamic musical performances. Ludacris and Migos headline the Jan. 31 show; Aerosmith and Post Malone are on the Feb. 1 bill; and Bruno Mars and Cardi B perform on Feb. 2. Tickets are available at **ticketmaster.com**.

DINE
SUPER BOWL BREAKFAST

Feb. 2 • Atlanta Marriott Marquis • 8 a.m.

The NFL-sanctioned Athletes in Action Super Bowl Breakfast has taken place in the Super Bowl host city every year since 1988, drawing sellout crowds to hear from some of the sport's biggest names. This year's speakers include Tony Dungy, Akbar Gbaja-Biamila, Anthony Múnoz, and Dan Reeves. The Bart Starr Award, presented at the breakfast, honors Starr's lifelong commitment to serving as a positive role model to his family, teammates, and community. The 2019 recipient is Calais Campbell of the Jacksonville Jaguars. Learn more and purchase tickets at **superbowlbreakfast.com**.

Rich Gressle/Getty Images

Benjamin Watson (left) is presented the 2018 Bart Starr Award by Tony Dungy.

TASTE OF THE NFL

Feb. 2 • Cobb Galleria • 7 p.m.

Join Taste of the NFL for its 28th annual Party with a Purpose®, the nonprofit's premier food, football, and charity event. Attendees will sample tastings from renowned chefs from the 32 NFL cities and mingle with current, alumni, and Hall of Fame players from all the NFL teams. They can also bid on over 250 unique sports and celebrity memorabilia, vacation packages, and other auction items. This year's chef host is Atlanta's Kevin Rathbun and the player host is former NFL linebacker Chris Draft. Award-winning country superstar Martina McBride will cap the evening with a performance of her biggest hits. Taste of the NFL's programs and events have raised in excess of $26 million for food banks and nonprofit organizations. More info is available at **tasteofthenfl.com**.

Atlanta's Kevin Rathbun (left) and Andrew Zimmern are two of the culinary stars at Taste of the NFL.

PARTICIPATE
KICKOFF TO REBUILD

Feb. 1 • Just Us Neighborhood • 8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Kickoff to Rebuild is an annual Super Bowl-sanctioned event hosted by Rebuilding Together, a national housing and community development nonprofit. For 24 years, Rebuilding Together has partnered with the NFL in Super Bowl cities across the country, rebuilding houses and bringing neighborhoods together. Through this initiative, Rebuilding Together has repaired 140 homes, engaged more than 5,000 volunteers, and invested more than $5 million in communities nationwide. For Super Bowl LIII, Rebuilding Together Atlanta, along with supporting community and corporate partners, will revitalize the Just Us neighborhood in the west side of Atlanta. Just Us is a historically black neighborhood developed in the 1950s for African-American residents during the height of the Civil Rights era. Residents of the once thriving community now find their neighborhood in decline due to passing time and lack of resources, putting them at risk of losing their homes. NFL sponsors and players, community members, local leadership, and Rebuilding Together will rebuild six homes and revitalize a community space, reinvigorating the historic culture of Just Us. Learn more about this project at **rebuildingtogether.org**.

Rebuilding Together is holding its 24th annual Kickoff to Rebuild event in Atlanta's Just Us neighborhood.

Ben Liebenberg/AP Images

NFL Network's coverage from Atlanta will include *Good Morning Football*'s Kay Adams (left) and Nate Burleson (right), shown here interviewing Randy Moss.

NFL Network: We're Live from Atlanta

NFL NETWORK IS YOUR ONE-STOP SHOP FOR ALL THINGS SUPER BOWL LIII. For the 16th year, NFL Network is providing on-location wall-to-wall Super Bowl coverage – this year with more than 80 hours of live programming from Atlanta.

On Super Bowl Sunday, *NFL GameDay Morning* is live with more than eight hours of coverage leading up to the big game, starting at 9 a.m. (ET). Following the game, *NFL GameDay Prime* provides postgame analysis and interviews with the Super Bowl LIII champions.

Good Morning Football kicks off NFL Network's Super Bowl Week starting Monday, Jan. 28, at 7 a.m., with hosts Kay Adams, Nate Burleson, Peter Schrager, and Kyle Brandt. Throughout the week, *Super Bowl Live* (Monday at 4 p.m.; Tuesday-Thursday at 11 a.m.; Friday-Saturday at 1 p.m.) provides daily updates, analysis, interviews, and practice reports. Recap the day's action each evening with *NFL Total Access* (Monday at 6 p.m. and 10 p.m.; Tuesday-Friday at 7 p.m.; Saturday at 11 p.m.) live from Atlanta.

Live from State Farm Arena, NFL Network will provide complete coverage of Super Bowl Opening Night on Monday, Jan. 28, starting at 7 p.m., as the Super Bowl teams address the media for the first time in Atlanta. *Super Bowl Prime*, live from the Super Bowl Experience in the Georgia World Congress Center, airs Wednesday-Friday at 9 p.m. with hosts Chris Rose, Deion Sanders, LaDainian Tomlinson, and Ro Parrish.

Gridiron Giveback, a new NFL Network series hosted by Warrick Dunn and Tiffany Blackmon, features NFL players giving back to the people and places that had an impact or inspired them to be the men they are today. It will air Wednesday, Jan. 30, at 10 p.m.

On Saturday, Feb. 2, *Super Bowl Saturday Night* offers pre-show coverage of *NFL Honors* at 8 p.m., with live post-show highlights on NFL Network's *NFL Total Access*.

NFL Network will also televise various news conferences throughout the week, including those of NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell and *Pepsi Super Bowl LIII Halftime Show* headliner Maroon 5.

NFL Network's on-air talent are some of the most recognizable names in sports television, have multiple Emmy nominations, and own a combined 21 Super Bowl rings.

For more programming information and a full list of NFL Network's broadcast team, please visit **nfl.com/nflnetwork** and follow **@NFLMedia** for the latest updates on Twitter.

STAY CONNECTED TO THE SUPER BOWL

Apps for those in Atlanta ... and beyond

SUPER BOWL APP & FAN MOBILE PASS

Download the Super Bowl LIII – Fan Mobile Pass app for exclusive access to Super Bowl Week events, gameday information, the chance to watch in-game replays and Super Bowl commercials, and the opportunity to pre-order for quick pick-up your favorite NFL gear.

Visit the app store or **nfl.com/sbapp** to download.

For exclusive access to Super Bowl event content, register for Fan Mobile Pass either within the app or by visiting **nfl.com/fanmobilepass**.

By registering and checking in with your Fan Mobile Pass at Super Bowl LIII events, you can participate in interactive games, have photos and videos saved to a personal landing page then emailed to you, and be entered for a chance to win prizes and tickets to Super Bowl LIII!

For more information on all Super Bowl LIII events, visit **superbowl.com**.

WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

- Visit superbowl.com for more information on all Super Bowl LIII events
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- Questions? Tag your posts with #SBQuestions

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CBS Has Its Eye on the Game

Left to right: Tony Romo, Jim Nantz, and Tracy Wolfson

THE CBS TELEVISION NETWORK MARKS ITS 20TH SUPER BOWL broadcast overall – the most of any network – with week-long, around-the-clock coverage culminating with CBS Sports' broadcast of Super Bowl LIII from Mercedes-Benz Stadium. Jim Nantz and Tony Romo call the action, along with Tracy Wolfson reporting, as the game marks the first time the team calls a Super Bowl together.

In addition, Evan Washburn will join the team as a sideline reporter, while Jay Feely, from the field, will serve as a Game Contributor for his second Super Bowl. And after serving as the head referee for Super Bowl LII, CBS Sports' new NFL Rules Analyst Gene Steratore will be in the booth alongside Nantz and Romo for his first Super Bowl broadcast.

Super Bowl LIII marks Nantz's fifth time handling play-by-play for the big game, and seventh overall for the network, in his illustrious 34-year CBS Sports career. Romo provides analysis for his first Super Bowl, and Wolfson and Washburn their second reporting from the sidelines.

CBS is traveling to Atlanta in full force, including the network's pregame show, *The Super Bowl Today*, with James Brown, who is hosting his ninth Super Bowl, Boomer Esiason, Bill Cowher, Phil Simms, and Nate Burleson, as well as Insider Jason La Canfora.

CBS is also providing a full week of Super Bowl coverage across its many divisions and platforms, including CBS Sports, CBS Entertainment, CBS News, CBS Sports Network, SHOWTIME Sports, CBS Sports Digital, CBS Television Distribution, and CBS Television Stations.

CBS Sports Network, the 24-hour home of CBS Sports, hits Atlanta with more than 75 hours of Super Bowl programming originating from the Super Bowl Experience and Radio Row, as well as extended postgame coverage. *Super Bowl Live* returns to CBS Sports Network this year, along with *We Need to Talk*, *NFL Monday QB*, *That Other Pregame Show*, *Time to Schein*, *Boomer and Gio*, *Tiki and Tierney*, and *The Jim Rome Show*. On game day, after CBS signs off its broadcast, *Super Bowl Today Postgame Live* will continue on CBS Sports Network with *The Super Bowl Today* team.

Sean McManus is Chairman, CBS Sports and Executive Producer for the Network's coverage of the NFL and Super Bowl LIII. David Berson is President, CBS Sports. Harold Bryant is Executive Producer and Senior Vice President, Production, CBS Sports.

Super Bowl LIII is produced by Jim Rikhoff and directed by Mike Arnold. Drew Kaliski is Producer and Bob Matina is Director of CBS' Super Bowl pregame show, *The Super Bowl Today*.

CBS SPORTS

WESTWOOD ONE IS THE RADIO HOME OF THE SUPER BOWL

Kevin Harlan and Kurt Warner

For the 32nd consecutive year and 46th time overall, Westwood One will serve as the exclusive network radio home of the Super Bowl.

Beginning at 5 pm (ET), Kevin Harlan and Super Bowl XXXIV MVP and Hall of Fame quarterback Kurt Warner will call the action to millions of listeners tuned in across 700 radio stations nationwide, in 175 countries, and nearly 250 ships at sea via the American Forces Radio Network. Fans also can hear the broadcast on SiriusXM, via TuneIn, and on NFL Game Pass.

This is Warner's first Super Bowl broadcast and Harlan's ninth. Super Bowl XXXI-winning coach Mike Holmgren will also contribute throughout the game broadcast, his fourth with Westwood One, while former All-Pro offensive lineman Tony Boselli and Hall of Fame reporter Ed Werder will patrol the sidelines of Mercedes-Benz Stadium.

Emmy Award-winning sportscaster Jim Gray hosts the pregame and halftime shows, along with five-time Super Bowl champion Tom Brady and Larry Fitzgerald. Scott Graham, Coach Holmgren, and Hall of Fame defensive back Rod Woodson kick off Westwood One's live coverage from Mercedes-Benz Stadium with *Super Sunday* at 4 p.m. The network's pregame coverage launches at 2 p.m. with *Super Bowl Preview* and *Super Bowl Insider*.

Westwood One will also produce *Seven Days to Sunday – The Road to Super Bowl LIII*. This hour-long preview show will air each night during the week leading up to Super Sunday.

Howard Deneroff is the Executive Producer of Westwood One Sports. Larry Costigan and Mike Eaby are coordinating producers.

Westwood One is the nation's leader in play-by-play radio sports; its other exclusive sports programming includes the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament and Final Four, the Olympics, the NHL, and The Masters.

Westwood One

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GAMEDAY FAN PLAZA

GameDay Fan Plaza will be open from 2 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. to all Super Bowl LIII ticketholders after passing through security on Super Bowl Sunday adjacent to the stadium. Entertainment includes pep squads, drumlines, unique photo opportunities, postcard-to-home stations, NFL Shop at Super Bowl presented by Visa, and more!

NFL ON LOCATION

The official hospitality partner of the NFL, On Location gives fans priority access to the stadium and exclusive parties on Super Bowl Sunday. A Super Bowl LIII game ticket and an On Location hospitality ticket are required for access into ALL party venues. Visit **nflonlocation.com** to access other exclusive NFL event experiences throughout the year!

Camdyn Clancy is this year's NFL PLAY 60 Super Kid.

Starting on a High Note

SEVEN-TIME GRAMMY AWARD-WINNER and "Empress of Soul" Gladys Knight will sing the national anthem as part of Super Bowl LIII pregame festivities.

Shariar Mirador/AP Images

The Atlanta native has enjoyed No. 1 hits in Pop, Gospel, R&B, and Adult Contemporary, and has triumphed in film, television, and live performance. She has recorded two No. 1 Billboard Hot 100 singles – "Midnight Train to Georgia" and "That's What Friends Are For" – along with 11 No. 1 R&B singles and six No. 1 R&B albums. Gladys Knight & the Pips were inducted into the Georgia Music Hall of Fame in 1989 and the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 1996.

In 2015, Knight released her first mainstream dance record, "Just A Little," in nearly 20 years. The song served as the lead single from her 12th studio album.

In addition, on behalf of the National Association of the Deaf (NAD), performer and deaf activist Aaron Loggins will sign in American Sign Language both the national anthem and "America The Beautiful."

MAN OF THE YEAR MOMENT

This year's Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year nominees will be recognized in an on-field ceremony at Mercedes-Benz Stadium prior to the kickoff of Super Bowl LIII. As the culmination of a weekend-long series of special events, these men and their families will be honored for their contributions to the game and their communities, followed by the introduction of the 2018 recipient.

Considered the league's most prestigious honor, the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award presented by Nationwide recognizes an NFL player for outstanding community service activities off the field as well as excellence on the field. The 32 nominees for the 2018 award were announced in December (for the full list, please see page 183). The winner will have $250,000 donated to the charity of his choice and $250,000 donated to expand Character Playbook, the NFL and United Way's digital character education program, across the country. All 32 nominees will receive donations in their name made to their charity of choice and to expand Character Playbook.

All donations are courtesy of NFL Foundation, Nationwide, and United Way Worldwide.

SALUTING THE SUPER KID

Camdyn Clancy of Juneau, Alaska, is this year's NFL PLAY 60 Super Kid. The 8-year-old is serving as the official NFL PLAY 60 Ambassador during Super Bowl Week and will deliver the game ball to the official on the field moments before the kickoff of Super Bowl LIII.

A third-grade student, athlete, and valued member of his community, Camdyn – a huge Seattle Seahawks fan – encourages everyone in his neighborhood to get physically active and teaches them how to play football. He is involved in a variety of activities, from skiing to fishing, and when it gets dark out early in Alaska, he dons his headlamp so he can still play outside. He empowers his peers to stay active and believes the opportunity to be this year's Super Kid will allow him the platform to encourage other kids to be healthy and strong. Learn more about the NFL PLAY 60 Super Bowl Contest presented by Danimals® at **nflrush.com/superkid**.

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Spectacular Lineup Sets Stage for a Halftime Show for the Ages

THREE-TIME GRAMMY AWARD-WINNING multiplatinum band Maroon 5 will take center stage at the *Pepsi Super Bowl LIII Halftime Show.* Maroon 5 will feature a slate of guest artists, including Grammy-nominated rapper Travis Scott and Atlanta native Big Boi, bringing together the broadest range of musical genres ever seen on the Super Bowl stage.

Maroon 5 stands out as not only one of pop music's most enduring artists, but also one of the 21st century's biggest acts. To date, the Los Angeles band has achieved three GRAMMY Awards and sold over 53 million albums and 48 million singles worldwide, and earned gold and platinum certifications in more than 35 countries. The band won over fans and critics alike with the hybrid rock/R&B sound it introduced on its debut album *Songs About Jane* and the double platinum *It Won't Be Soon Before Long.*

The album *Hands All Over* featured the anthemic "Moves Like Jagger," while *V* debuted at No. 1 on Billboard's Top 200 chart and featured the hits "Maps," "Animals," and "Sugar," helping the band set a record for the most No. 1's by a group in the Top 40 chart's 20-year history, with nine in total.

In late 2017, Maroon 5 released its sixth studio album, *Red Pill Blues.* It includes the global hit single "Girls Like You" featuring Cardi B, which reached No. 1 on the Top 40, Adult Pop, and Billboard Hot 100 charts. The band recently finished 2018 as the biggest act on U.S. radio (according to Nielsen Music). The group's songs amassed 8.58 billion audience impressions across all monitored radio stations, which included 1.95 million plays of Maroon 5's music.

GRAMMY-nominated global superstar **Travis Scott** has established himself as a leading force in the music world. His third full-length album, *ASTROWORLD*, debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard 200, scored the second-largest debut of 2018, and has since been certified platinum by the RIAA. The critically acclaimed album also yielded his first Billboard Hot 100 No. 1 single with "SICKO MODE," and garnered a total of three GRAMMY nominations: Best Rap Album, Best Rap Song, and Best Rap Performance.

Atlanta indisputably set the pace for modern hip-hop. However, **Big Boi** set the pace for Atlanta, and by proxy, the culture at large, making history as the preeminent spitter of the Dungeon Family and one-half of OutKast. The legendary duo sold 25 million albums and garnered seven GRAMMY Awards. Big Boi made his proper introduction as a solo artist in 2010 with *Sir Lucious Left Foot: The Son of Chico Dusty.* It captured No. 3 on the Billboard Top 200. Following a succession of high-profile album releases, Big Boi released his latest album, *Boomiverse*, in 2017. The smash single "All Night" clocked 40 million streams within a year.

The *Pepsi Super Bowl LIII Halftime Show* is the most-watched musical event of the year. It is an NFL Network Production and will be executive produced by Ricky Kirshner and directed by Hamish Hamilton.

Super Bowl XXXIV in Atlanta became the crowning achievement for Kurt Warner and his incredible 1999 season, when he led the Rams to victory over the Titans.

Ed Reinke/AP Images

ATLANTA SHINED THE SPOTLIGHT ON KURT WARNER'S AMAZING JOURNEY FROM BAGGING GROCERIES TO BEING A SUPER BOWL HERO – AND ALL THE STOPS IN BETWEEN.

BY ADITI KINKHABWALA

THE UNLIKELY HOWMAN

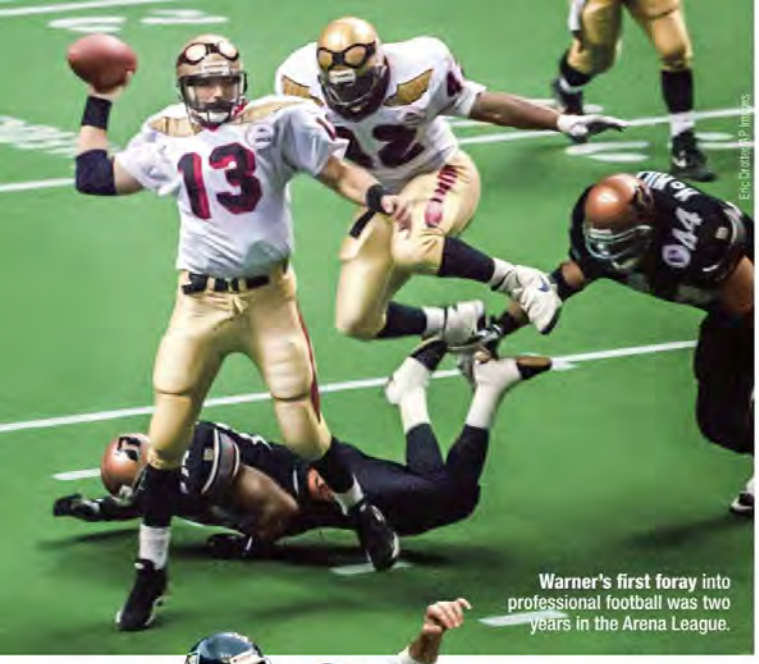
Now that nearly two decades have gone by, now that the 1999 Rams team is officially cemented as one of history's most dynamic – fantastic moniker and all – and now that Kurt Warner is forever enshrined in the Pro Football Hall of Fame, London Fletcher has no problem telling the truth.

When Rams head coach Dick Vermeil sat forward in his chair that day in August, when he tearily talked about starting quarterback Trent Green's devastating injury and promised the world, "We will rally around Kurt Warner and we will play good football," he didn't have many buyers.

"I'm not sure," Fletcher says, "any of us really believed him."

Fletcher, the team's starting middle linebacker, then laughed. Because these days, there are all sorts of folks saying they foresaw Warner's greatness. And every single one of them, Fletcher insists, "is lying."

As the Super Bowl returns to Atlanta, it comes back to the scene of perhaps the most unexpected, and most magical, of football fairy tales. Before the 1999 season, Kurt Warner was a 28-year-old unknown never-had-been whose biggest body of work came in the Arena League and whose sum total of NFL experience was 39 passing yards. But by the end of that season, when Vermeil, Fletcher, and the rest of the St. Louis Rams hoisted the Lombardi Trophy high above their heads at the Georgia Dome, it was because they'd been buoyed by the arm of Warner. Some might call it "kismet."



Eric Draper/AP Images

Warner's first foray into professional football was two years in the Arena League.

After signing a Futures contract with the Rams, Warner was assigned to the Amsterdam Admirals of NFL Europe.

Srdjan Petrovic/AP Images

Trent Green entered the 1999 season as the Rams' starting quarterback until a knee injury put Kurt Warner in the spotlight.

James A. Finley/AP Images

"Without question, I hit the perfect storm," Warner says, still marveling a bit, all these years later, at the way the football fates lined up. "I'm not going to sit here and tell you I thought it would work out the way it did."

Warner was supposed to be the Rams' backup quarterback in 1999, moving up one slot on the depth chart after being the third-stringer the year before. That he'd even made the team – or was in the NFL – was a story in itself. He'd started exactly one year at Division I-AA Northern Iowa. He was his conference's Offensive Player of the Year but then went undrafted, and though the Green Bay Packers brought him to training camp in 1994, they cut him before the regular season even started. (Kismet point No. 1: Fellow Hall of Famer and Packers legend Brett Favre didn't miss a snap from that year until Warner retired. "If I'd made that team," Warner says, "I never would've seen the field.")

WARNER WAS SUPPOSED TO BE THE RAMS' BACKUP QB IN 1999, MOVING UP ONE SLOT ON THE DEPTH CHART AFTER BEING THE THIRD-STRINGER THE YEAR BEFORE.

Though he had a strong arm and deceiving athleticism, Warner wasn't particularly seasoned, and so after a year stocking a grocer's shelves for $5.50 an hour, his next opportunity came with the Iowa Barnstormers of the Arena Football League. In 1996 and 1997, he played in the Arena League's title game and earned All-Arena honors. After the 1996 season, the Chicago Bears called, offering him a tryout.

He accepted the date and then had to cancel, forgetting that he was getting married on the same day. The Bears gave him a second date, but he got stung by something while on his honeymoon, ran a fever, and had his elbow swell up, and when he tried to postpone again, well, "They never called again," Warner says. (Kismet point No. 2: The 1997 Bears were a run-heavy team led by old-school football denizen Dave Wannstedt.)

After that 1997 season, the Rams signed Warner to a Futures contract and sent him off to the Amsterdam Admirals of NFL Europe. He played well enough that the Rams kept him stateside in 1998. He ran the scout team and, sure, he'd on occasion shred the Rams' stout defense. But he wasn't getting hit, and he admits never being as good a practice player as he was under the lights of game day. So when the 1999 expansion draft came and every NFL team had to expose five players, Warner was among those St. Louis left unprotected.

Once the (new) Cleveland Browns passed him by, the Rams knew they'd have him back, yet they still went out and signed Trent Green, who had spent the previous four seasons with the Redskins. Warner went back over all that and then chuckles, "Trent was what gave us hope!"

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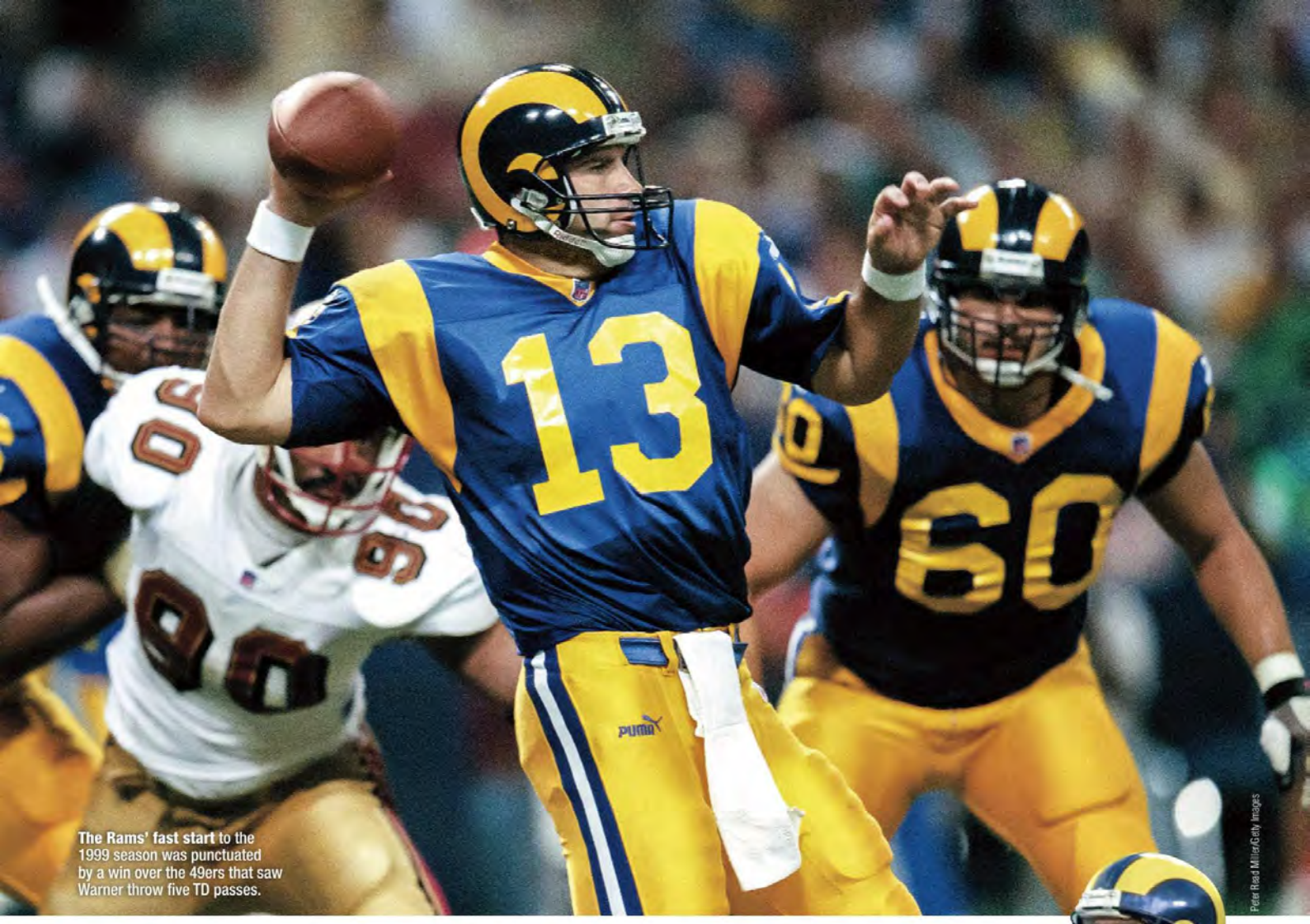


The Rams' fast start to the 1999 season was punctuated by a win over the 49ers that saw Warner throw five TD passes.

Peter Read Miller/Getty Images

At that point, Warner says he was just happy to be the backup. He wasn't truly competing for the starting job, and he was very famously offensive coordinator Mike Martz's favorite target.

"Mike would just destroy him. But we all knew what he was doing. Kurt would study and draw, study and draw. He obviously put in the work," Green says. "The thought process was I wasn't going to get hurt and Kurt was going to have time to develop."

Green did, of course, get hurt, tearing his ACL in the team's third preseason game. Green remembers discussions of the Rams trying to talk Jeff Hostetler out of retirement, but even through his own disappointment, he also remembers telling part-owner Stan Kroenke, "If Kurt goes out there and has some early success, it's just going to snowball.

"I thought he had potential. He needed experience," Green says.

Warner got a small dose of experience in the fourth preseason game; then, in the regular-season opener against the Ravens, he threw for 284 yards and three touchdowns in a 27-10 win. And, sure enough, the snowball started to roll. Lopsided victories over Atlanta and Cincinnati followed, then came a 42-20 drubbing of the 49ers, a team that had beaten the Rams 17 consecutive times before that game. It was during that week when Warner felt a change in the team.

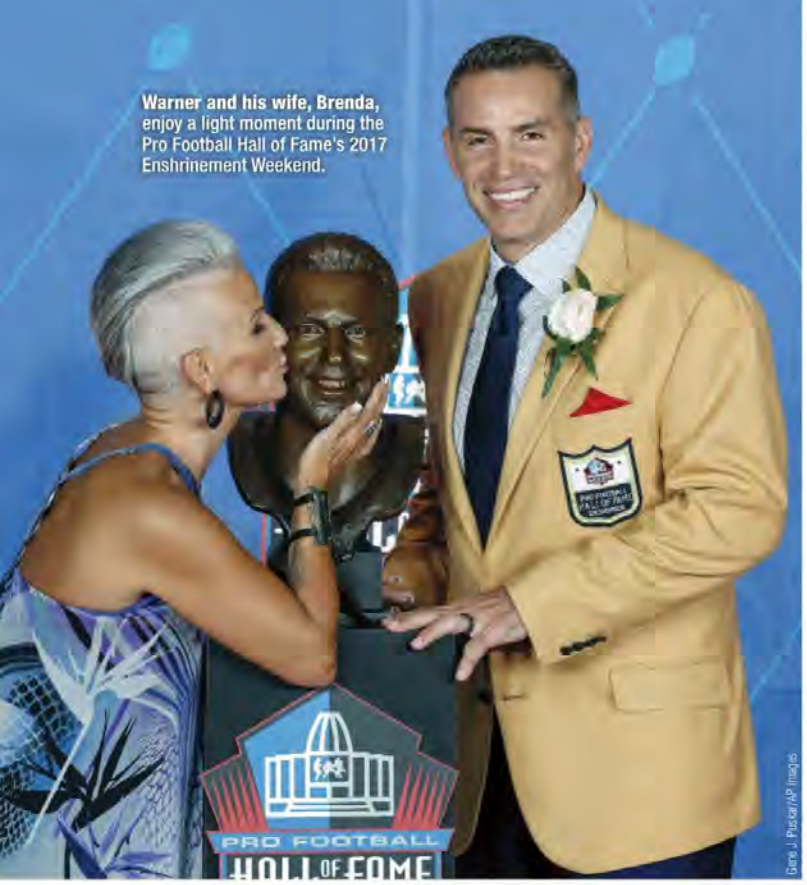
"The way we came out and just dominated that game early on, we all started believing we had something," Warner says.

And "someone," Fletcher adds.

"The thing that jumped out at me was Kurt's toughness in the pocket,"

Chuck Burton/AP Images

Rams owner Georgia Frontiere (left) celebrates with head coach Dick Vermeil (center) and Warner after the Rams clinched the 1999 NFC West title.



Warner and his wife, Brenda, enjoy a light moment during the Pro Football Hall of Fame's 2017 Enshrinement Weekend.

Gene J. Puskar/AP Images

Warner cites faith and family as the two most important driving forces in his life.

Gene Lowe/AP Images

Fletcher says. "That game, the 49ers came at him. There were times he knew he was about to get hit, and he just would not flinch. He wasn't out there chucking and ducking."

Each week, Warner found more admirers. He was ridiculously accurate, especially under pressure. He could release the ball a millisecond before the rush arrived, he saw the entire field, and he used every piece of what would prove to be an incredibly talented roster.

Looking back now, Warner believes he was uniquely prepared for his opportunity. The stints in the Arena League and NFL Europe gave him more snaps, he said, "than probably any backup in history." And then there was the style of those two leagues; in Arena football, the goal was to put up 50 points every game.

"My mindset was different from guys who play real football. In real football, you score 28 points, and that's a great game. Where I came from, if we punted twice, I was mad," Warner says. "I'm asked a lot if I had the skills for Arena football before or if I learned them there? I don't know the answer to that. But I know those skills became my greatest strengths in the NFL."

Fletcher says Warner didn't change in any discernible way as the season went on … and the Rams racked up wins.

"People changed around him, as far as how they treated him, and he had to figure out how to deal with the celebrity around him," Fletcher recalls. "But because of his faith, he was very cognizant of wanting to acknowledge the blessings he had. And he was always mindful of making sure everyone was recognized, that it wasn't only about him."

The biggest part of that was his faith, something Warner freely talks about. He was grounded in his family: his wife, Brenda; her older two biological children that he'd adopted; and the son they'd just had. But there were plenty of blessings, football-wise, around him as well.

The Rams' defense to this day is undersold; it generated turnovers and scored points itself. On offense, the team featured Marshall Faulk, a

BY THE TIME THE 1999 PLAYOFFS ROLLED AROUND, EVERYONE IN THE FOOTBALL WORLD KNEW ABOUT KURT WARNER.

three-time Offensive Player of the Year, at running back. Rookie Torry Holt joined Isaac Bruce, Ricky Proehl, and Az-Zahir Hakim at wide receiver, and the offensive line, Warner says, was one of the league's best. The unit became immortalized as "The Greatest Show on Turf."

Warner also had an attacking play-caller in Martz, a man who had designed a truly innovative offense that would ultimately set NFL records for scoring and yardage.

"The beautiful thing is that what we did offensively was just a perfect fit for me. It was designed around things I did well," Warner says. "The throws they were asking me to make were right in my wheelhouse. And to the coaching staff's credit, even after Trent's injury, we still came out and did what we'd been doing before: We threw first."

And in Vermeil, Warner had a coach who truly ran a meritocracy. It was universally expected that without a strong year, Vermeil would be out of a job at season's end. Still, he trusted his own eyes and not, as Fletcher put it, "the press clippings on somebody."

"He was always willing to give the underdog a shot to compete, and he had an innate ability to see something within everybody," Fletcher says. Fletcher was himself an example of this, an undrafted free agent out of Division III John Carroll who was given the chance to win the middle linebacker spot. If anyone were to have an open mind about an undrafted, once-cut, former grocery store stocker, it was Vermeil.

Warner says he loves to joke that Vermeil's famous tears that 1999 preseason were "not for Trent's injury, but because they were stuck with me." But in the same breath, he adds, "Coach Vermeil believed in me. I'm a very realistic guy and I can see the big picture. It would have been very reasonable for him to say, 'I don't know if we can go down with this guy no one knows about.'"

Warner returned to the Super Bowl with the Cardinals, where he led a near upset of the Steelers in Super Bowl XLIII.

Ben Liebenberg/AP Images

By the time the 1999 playoffs rolled around, everyone in the football world knew about Kurt Warner and the Rams. They were undefeated at home, owned a conference-best 13-3 overall record, and their 526 points scored were 83 more than any other team. They beat the Vikings, 49-37, in the Divisional round and then their defense paced them to an 11-6 win over the Buccaneers in the NFC Championship Game.

Against the Titans in the Super Bowl, the Rams racked up yards early, as they always did, but couldn't punch the ball into the end zone. They held just a 9-0 halftime lead. In the third quarter, Warner hit Holt for the game's first touchdown – but then Tennessee came roaring back, scoring 16 straight points to knot the game with just 2:12 to play.

It was then that Vermeil grabbed Warner and told him that this would go as it always had when he was a big-dreaming kid playing in his yard. And it did. On the first play of the Rams' ensuing drive, Warner hit Bruce in stride at the Titans 38-yard line. The receiver raced for the go-ahead touchdown, and although there was eventually a game-saving tackle from Rams linebacker Mike Jones to secure the win, that Super Bowl and that season are forever branded as the "Year of Kurt Warner."

"If I was growing up in my front yard and I was dreaming of playing in the NFL and someone asked, 'By the time you're 28, you'll have won an MVP and a Super Bowl, would you take it?' I'd have said, 'No doubt,'" Warner says with a smile. "It's just ironic that it happened my first year. I was catapulted at the age of 28 to a place that any quarterback would've loved being. And it happened in a crazy manner."

The Rams and Warner went back to the Super Bowl two years later, losing in as nearly dramatic a fashion as they had won their title, falling to the Patriots and their second-year quarterback Tom Brady (who, before taking over for a hurt Drew Bledsoe in Week 2 that season, had only thrown three NFL passes). Warner's legacy was then truly cemented years later, when after losing his starting job with the Giants to rookie Eli Manning, he moved on to Arizona, where he put the Cardinals on his shoulders and took them to Super Bowl XLIII – and would have won a second Super Bowl ring if not for that great pass-and-catch from Ben Roethlisberger to Santonio Holmes.

Warner has covered the game on TV and radio for the past nine seasons and last year watched Nick Foles replace an injured Carson Wentz in Week 14 and then march the Eagles to the Lombardi Trophy. Still, Warner believes his Super Bowl story, written here in Atlanta, remains the unlikeliest. Brady was a draft pick and second-year understudy; Foles had been an NFL starter who'd played at a high level before.

"More than anything, I wasn't on anyone's radar. I wasn't on anyone's map," says Warner, who will be at Mercedes-Benz Stadium for Super Bowl LIII as the color commentator on Westwood One's radio broadcast. "Couple that with the entire season that goes with it, from what we did all year to the way we won the Super Bowl to the fact that I might not have even been in football if not for a few weird turns, isn't that the craziest?"

It's hard to argue. But then again, as Warner himself says, no one knows where the next unexpected story will come from.

Aditi Kinkhabwala *is a reporter on NFL Network and a writer for nfl.com. She's previously been on staff at the* Wall Street Journal, *the* Bergen Record, *and the* San Antonio Express-News, *and wrote a weekly column for si.com.*

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BRINGING IT HOME

THROUGH INSPIRATION, INNOVATION, AND INCLUSION, FALCONS OWNER *ARTHUR BLANK* HAS BUILT ATLANTA INTO ONE OF THE NFL'S PREMIER CITIES.

BY MARIA SAPORTA

SHORTLY AFTER BUYING the Atlanta Falcons in early 2002, Arthur Blank was in New York for a new NFL owners orientation when he had breakfast with Robert Kraft, owner of the New England Patriots.

Kraft gave Blank advice he's never forgotten.

"Everybody is going to tell you that the NFL is different – that you can't run [a team] the same way you ran Home Depot," Kraft told Blank. "But I'm going to tell you that if you follow the same attributes and values and culture that you did at Home Depot in the NFL, you're going to be very successful."

For Blank, that was not a stretch.

Home Depot's organizational chart resembles an inverted pyramid. At the highest level are the customers, followed by front-line associates and corporate support. The CEO is at the lowest rung, based on the theory that if a company places customers and associates first, the rest will take care of itself. As Home Depot's co-founder, Blank had sealed that culture as part of his DNA.

"Right from the get-go, everything was engrained in me – my 'orange blood philosophy' if you will," Blank says. "That's how I have run the team and made every decision regarding associates, our fans and stakeholders, our sponsors, everybody."

The formula has worked.

When he bought the team from the family of the late Rankin Smith, the Atlanta Falcons were far from an NFL success story.

"The commissioner at the time, Paul Tagliabue, said to me, 'You've never had back-to-back winning seasons,'" Blank recalls. "I said, 'That can't be right.' So I went back and checked. He was right."

Tagliabue also half-joked that out of the 31 NFL teams at the time, "the Atlanta Falcons would be ranked 37th based on local revenues. Sure enough, he was right about that, too," Blank says.

While Blank didn't take it personally, he was embarrassed for the city. "I knew Atlanta could do better than that," he says.

The new Falcons ownership team surveyed those who were coming to the games, and those who weren't. The venue was rarely sold out, less than half of those in attendance were Falcons fans, and a third were supporting the opposing team.

"We had no home field advantage," Blank explains. When he asked the players how he could help them, they told him to fill the Georgia Dome with fans. So the Falcons sold season tickets for $100 – $10 a game.

"I called Commissioner Tagliabue and told him what I wanted to do. He said I had the authority to do that, but the other owners would not be happy about it," Blank says. "We sold out the rest of the stadium, about 25,000 seats, inside of two hours. From that point on, other than a couple of games after (quarterback) Michael Vick broke his leg, we have sold out every game."

Still, Blank soon realized the Falcons would either need to revamp their stadium or build a new one. Protracted negotiations with the City of Atlanta and the State of Georgia eventually yielded the new $1.5 billion Mercedes-Benz Stadium, which opened in the fall of 2017. Although the roof took an additional nine months to complete, the stadium has been heralded by fans of the Falcons and the Major League Soccer franchise it houses – Atlanta United Football Club.

Blank marvels at both the crowds and atmosphere he's seen at the stadium.

"It's hard to encapsulate that passion, that emotion, that energy," he told the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* in December, days before Atlanta United defeated Portland, 2-0, for the MLS Cup in front of 73,019 fans. "I've never experienced that in any sport or any venue, any concert or anything, in my entire life. It's great to be a part of that."

With the opening of Mercedes-Benz Stadium, Blank lowered food and beverage prices – a move that made national news. After the Falcons' first game, Blank received a "long, hand-written note" from former President Barack Obama, who had watched the game and congratulated the Falcons owner on that decision.

For Blank, however, building a world-class stadium was only half of the equation. The other half was to lift up the Westside, the struggling communities across Northside Drive from the new stadium.

Blank inspired business and civic leaders to return the Westside to where it was 50 or so years ago, a thriving community that included Martin Luther King Jr. and a host of civil rights leaders and African-American scholars.

Jonathan Bachman/Getty Images

The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation already has invested more than $40 million in these communities – funding job training programs, housing rehabilitation, education initiatives, community policing, and new parks, as well as health and wellness offerings. At the same time, Blank is committed to the residents of these neighborhoods.

"We want to make sure that the people who live here have the option to stay here," Blank says. "That's where the issue of affordable housing, a key issue for the mayor and a key issue for our foundation, comes into play. We need to make sure they are not forced to leave."

Atlanta's hosting of the Super Bowl also has been paramount for Blank. The city has not had a Super Bowl since 2000 (Rams-Titans), when it was hit with a freak ice storm during Super Bowl weekend. That appeared to freeze Atlanta's chances of getting the big game again … until Blank convinced his fellow owners to award the 2019 Super Bowl.

Blank, who is soft spoken and always immaculately dressed, is a man of strong convictions whose leadership has been felt far beyond Home Depot and the Falcons. When he was chairman of the Metro Atlanta Chamber in 2003, he led the business community's successful efforts to get the Legislature to change the Georgia State flag, which then included the Confederate battle emblem. He also serves on many boards, including the Carter Center, founded by former President Jimmy Carter.

Growing up in Flushing, N.Y., Blank lost his father when he was only 15. His mother – Molly Blank, who died in 2015 a few months shy of turning 100 – was an inspiration throughout his life.

"It was hard for my brother, myself, and my mother," Blank says. "Father was an entrepreneur, started his own business, and was successful enough so my mother could take it over without any business background."

Blank described his life at the time as one of modest means. When he married his first wife, Diana, they bought their first home for $30,500. "I told Diana at the time: 'Well, I won't embarrass you. We'll keep covering the mortgage, but I don't know if we'll ever be able to pay off this loan.'"

Eventually the family business was sold to Daylin, the parent company of Handy Dan Home Improvement Centers, where Blank first teamed up with Bernie Marcus. Both were fired from Handy Dan, and that gave them the impetus to launch the Home Depot.

At 76, Blank is beginning to contemplate his legacy.

"My goal is to live as long as I can, live a quality, productive life where my mental health, my physical health, and my spiritual health are intact," he says. "If I'm doing that, I'll be productive and I'll be there for all of the people I love and who love me, starting with my family."

Blank has six children, three from his first marriage – Kenny Blank, Dena Blank Kimball, and Danielle Blank Thomsen – all now involved with nonprofits, and three from his second marriage – Joshua, Max, and Kylie. It is likely they will end up working for AMB Group's different entities, which include the Falcons, Atlanta United, PGA TOUR Superstore, and two guest ranches in Montana.

The desire to involve family and community is important to Blank. Fortunately, he says, the NFL has loosened its ownership rules so a principal owner can now own as little as 30 percent of a team. That means owners can sell minority stakes in their teams to build equity for philanthropy and other ventures while keeping the franchise in the family.

"It's one of the reasons the NFL wants a principal owner – they want a family, somebody to take the significant money stake who understands the city and, usually, lives in the city where the franchise is located," Blank says. "I view myself as a steward of the fans, as a custodian of the franchise. I view the fans as really being the owners."

Rich von Biberstein/Getty Images

Left to right: Falcons owner Arthur Blank hired head coach Dan Quinn (left) in 2015, and one year later, the team won the NFC title and advanced to Super Bowl LI. Blank has a keen connection to the Falcons players and often visits team practices. Blank embraces Atlanta United captain Michael Parkhurst after the team won the MLS Cup in December.

Blank also has signed "the Giving Pledge" – to give away at least 50 percent of his wealth to charitable causes (though he's stated several times he will give back 95 percent through the Foundation).

"We want to continue to grow our foundation at a significant rate," Blank says. "My kids have all encouraged me to be aggressive in my philanthropy during my lifetime."

In 2016, Blank revealed he had prostate cancer, which has since been successfully treated.

"Everything is good," he says. Still, Blank is keenly aware of death. Two of his closest friends have died in recent years – John Imlay in 2015 and John Williams in 2018. Both were minority owners of the Falcons, and both were instrumental in Blank buying the team.

"It makes you realize that no matter how much success you may have, life does not go on forever, and there are no guarantees," Blank says. "So, which day was the most important day? I would say today because you're not guaranteed any tomorrows. I'm much more aware that I'm not living on borrowed time, but living on a more limited amount of time than I was before.

"Every day is a pivotal point in my life."

Maria Saporta *is a long-time Atlanta journalist who spent 27 years with the* Atlanta Journal-Constitution. *Since 2008, she has been writing for the* Atlanta Business Chronicle *and launched her own website – saportareport.com.*

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Trey Burton's TD pass to Nick Foles in Super Bowl LII – on a play that's come to be known as "Philly Special" – spurred the Eagles to their first Super Bowl title.

Mark Humphrey/AP Images. Opposite Page: Greg Trott/AP Images

SPECIAL DELIVERIES

HISTORY HAS SHOWN THAT YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A QUARTERBACK TO MAKE A BIG THROW IN THE SUPER BOWL. *BY JUDY BATTISTA*

Every day when the Philadelphia Eagles practiced last season, Trey Burton would throw the ball around.

As a former high school quarterback who moved to tight end in college, Burton's Eagles teammates knew he had as good an arm as anyone on the team not named Wentz or Foles. So it's not surprising that Burton looked on ruefully as the Eagles worked on one or two trick plays for each game – with coach Doug Pederson giving several players the chance to throw a pass, but with Burton only on the receiving end.

Then came the postseason.

That's when Eagles quarterbacks coach Press Taylor pulled out a series of trick plays he had tucked into a folder from research done the year before. "Philly Special," as it came to be immortalized, was installed during practice in the days before the Eagles played the Atlanta Falcons in the NFC Divisional playoffs.

It was a whopper of a play – a direct snap to running back Corey Clement while quarterback Nick Foles pretended to yell what looked like an audible at his offensive line. Clement would sprint

left before flipping the ball to Burton, who was cutting across the backfield in the opposite direction. The tight end then threw the ball to a wide open Foles on the right side of the field.

"When we first put it in, that's your dream scenario: a game-winning touchdown throw in the playoffs," Burton says. "You don't do it that first week, you keep thinking about it. Don't do it the second week, thinking about it. The Super Bowl comes along – holy crap, what if we did that then?"

What if.

Trick plays work because of the element of surprise, of course, but they are surprisingly common in the Super Bowl. Patriots linebacker Mike Vrabel caught touchdown passes from Tom Brady in two consecutive Super Bowls (XXXVIII and XXXIX) and Bears defensive lineman William "Refrigerator" Perry's Super Bowl XX touchdown run remains one of the game's most memorable scores.

But as Burton's reaction – "What if we did that then?"– indicates, Super Bowl passes attempted by anyone other than a quarterback are exceedingly rare. After all, why take the ball out of the best thrower's hands in the most important game of everybody's lives?

It requires the unique combination of a perfect situation, a dose of guile, and a ton of derring-do, the formula the Eagles took advantage of to stun the Patriots and everybody else in Super Bowl LII, but which few others encounter or have the nerve to exploit. In fact, according to research, Burton's pass is one of just eight attempted by non-quarterbacks in the first 52 Super Bowls. That's eight out of a total of 6,693 offensive plays run in Super Bowl history.

Robert Riger/Getty Images

Peter Read Miller/Getty Images

Above: Running back Lawrence McCutcheon (30) put the Rams ahead in Super Bowl XIV with his touchdown pass to Ron Smith (84). **Below:** Dallas salted away victory in Super Bowl XII when fullback Robert Newhouse (44) found Golden Richards (83) for a fourth-quarter TD.

AP Images

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Burton admits that he cast long glances at Pederson during the Eagles' first two playoff victories, bumping him on occasion to make sure the coach remembered the play was available. But when the moment came – with 38 seconds remaining before halftime of the Super Bowl and the Eagles clinging to a 15-12 lead as they faced a fourth-and-goal from the 1-yard line – Burton had no clue. In the huddle, Foles coolly called the play and Burton met his eyes and nodded slightly.

"When we installed it, we completed the play in practice with a pass," Burton says. "But for some reason, my throws weren't pretty enough. Doug would tell me, 'You know you can run [the ball].' He wanted me to run it. Throwing it was the first option … there was no other option. I had the chance to throw the ball for one of the first times since high school. And I always wanted to throw a touchdown."

It worked to perfection. Foles paused for a moment after the snap to make it appear as though he wasn't part of the play before darting into the end zone on cue. He was wide open, Burton's pass was on target, and the Eagles took a 22-12 lead into the locker room. The play has already gained such an outsized place in Eagles lore that some fans have gotten tattoos of the play design.

As jaw-dropping as Philly Special was, its success was no aberration. Of the eight passes attempted by non-quarterbacks in Super Bowls, six have been completed. Four have gone for touchdowns, the first of those coming in Super Bowl XII, when Cowboys fullback Robert Newhouse threw a 29-yard scoring pass to Golden Richards to secure Dallas' 27-10 victory over the Broncos. Two years later in Super Bowl XIV,

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The Steelers secured victory in Super Bowl XL when wideout Antwaan Randle-El (82) hit Hines Ward (86) on a 43-yard touchdown pass.

Rams running back Lawrence McCutcheon lofted a 24-yard touchdown pass to Ron Smith to give Los Angeles a short-lived lead over the Steelers.

Then teams lost their nerve. It wasn't until Super Bowl XXII, when Broncos running back Steve Sewell completed a 23-yard pass to John Elway, that another non-quarterback pass was even attempted.

How times have changed.

Burton's toss in Super Bowl LII wasn't even the first by a non-quarterback in that game. Just minutes earlier in the second quarter, the Patriots attempted a strikingly similar play, with Danny Amendola – who had never played quarterback – attempting a short pass intended for Tom Brady on third-and-five from the Eagles 35. The ball glanced off Brady's fingertips.

That outcome, however, is unlikely to dampen coach Bill Belichick's enthusiasm for a trick play. He had receiver Julian Edelman – a former college quarterback – attempt a pass in the third quarter of Super Bowl LI, although it, too, was incomplete.

In fact, such plays might be getting more popular on the game's biggest stage. Four of the eight non-quarterback passes have been attempted since Super Bowl XL, when receiver Antwaan Randle El, a former college signal-caller who still calls himself "a quarterback at heart," tapped into what he remembers as part of the Steelers' DNA that year – the trick play.

He took the ball from running back Willie Parker on a reverse and then, rolling to his right, fired a perfect 43-yard touchdown pass to Hines Ward. It was a back-breaking touchdown, giving the Steelers a 21-10 lead over the Seahawks with 8:56 remaining.

The play was called Fake-39 Toss X-Reverse Pass, and although the Steelers scored with it in a regular-season game against the Cleveland Browns, they repeatedly botched it during the week of practice leading up to the Super Bowl – failing to pick up a blitz, overthrowing the receiver, the receiver taking the wrong route, and so on.

Still, before the game, Randle El exhorted offensive coordinator Ken Whisenhunt: "Turn it loose, Coach!" The Steelers had struggled

Peter Read Miller/Getty Images

PASSING MOMENTS

Passes thrown by anyone other than a quarterback are rare in Super Bowl history. Just eight times in the first 52 Super Bowls has a non-QB attempted a pass, but based on the results, it may become a play teams call more often. Six of those eight passes have been completed, four for touchdowns, for a total of 145 yards. Their passer rating? A near-perfect 156.25.

Here is a list of the passes thrown by non-quarterbacks in the Super Bowl:

GAME	PASSER	RECEIVER	RESULT
SB V	**Sam Havrilak (RB)**, Colts	**Eddie Hinton**	25-yard completion, fumble
SB XII	**Robert Newhouse (FB)**, Cowboys	**Golden Richards**	29-yard touchdown
SB XIV	**Lawrence McCutcheon (RB)**, Rams	**Ron Smith**	24-yard touchdown
SB XXII	**Steve Sewell (RB)**, Broncos	**John Elway**	23-yard completion
SB XL	**Antwaan Randle El (WR)**, Steelers	**Hines Ward**	43-yard touchdown
SB LI	**Julian Edelman (WR)**, Patriots	**Dion Lewis**	Incomplete
SB LII	**Danny Amendola (WR)**, Patriots	**Tom Brady**	Incomplete
SB LII	**Trey Burton (TE)**, Eagles	**Nick Foles**	1-yard touchdown

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Colts running back Sam Havrilak (17) became the first non-QB to throw a pass in the Super Bowl with his 25-yard completion in Super Bowl V.

Getty Images

to move the ball against the Seahawks, but Randle El knew the reverse would work because of what Parker had done at the start of the third quarter – when he unleashed a 75-yard touchdown run.

"I WENT OUT THERE WITH THE INTENT TO THROW THAT BALL. HINES (WARD) WOULD HAVE HAD TO BE DOUBLE COVERED FOR ME NOT TO THROW IT."

–ANTWAAN RANDLE EL ON HIS SUPER BOWL XL TD PASS

Sure enough, on first-and-10 from the Seattle 43-yard line, as Parker took the pitch from QB Ben Roethlisberger and headed to the left, the safety came down to seal him off. By then, Parker had handed the ball to Randle El and Roethlisberger had hurled himself at an onrushing defender. That gave Randle El an unhurried throw and Ward plenty of time to get behind the entire defense.

"It was a dream," Randle El says. "It just goes back to what we were as a team, not holding anything back. They gave me a run-pass option. I could have run the reverse for 15 or 20 yards, but I went out there with the intent to throw that ball. Hines would have had to be double covered for me not to throw it."

Colts running back Sam Havrilak is the father of such plays, his coming in Super Bowl V. In fact, Havrilak is the first player in NFL history to complete a pass, catch a pass, and take a handoff in the Super Bowl. The pass, says Havrilak, who is now a dentist, remains lodged in his head. Colts coach Don McCafferty loved trick plays so much that he regularly perused the playbook used by his son's high school team.

Interestingly, Havrilak's pass was actually the result of a busted play. On second-and-one from the Cowboys 30-yard line, and with the Colts trailing, 13-6, midway through the fourth quarter, Havrilak took a handoff from quarterback Earl Morrall. He was supposed to fake a sweep to the right and throw it back to Morrall for a flea flicker. But when Havrilak turned around, he saw 6-foot-6 Cowboys defensive lineman Jethro Pugh standing in his way and knew he wouldn't be able to throw the ball over Pugh's outstretched arms.

So he improvised and spotted wide receiver Eddie Hinton wide open downfield. Hinton caught the pass for a 25-yard completion, but as he was running toward the end zone for what could have been the game-tying touchdown, Cowboys defensive back Cornell Green stripped him. The ball rolled out of the end zone for a touchback.

"I talked to Eddie about 10 years ago and he asked, 'Are you still angry at me?'" Havrilak recalls. "I said 'Why would I be angry at you? Hell no! Why would I be angry, we won the game.'"

Havrilak and Randle El both watched Super Bowl LII. Even those who authored unique plays long before Burton and Foles were in the NFL were dazzled by a play that lived up to its name.

"It took a lot of guts to call that play," Havrilak says.

It was, just like the ones that came before it, special.

Judy Battista *is an award-winning sportswriter who has covered the NFL since 2000. She is a columnist and on-air analyst for nfl.com and NFL Network.*

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The most common side effects of XOFLUZA in adults and adolescents include:

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- bronchitis
- common cold symptoms (nasopharyngitis)
- headache
- nausea

XOFLUZA is not effective in treating infections other than influenza. Other kinds of infections can appear like flu or occur along with flu and may need different kinds of treatment. Tell your healthcare provider if you feel worse or develop new symptoms during or after treatment with XOFLUZA or if your flu symptoms do not start to get better. These are not all the possible side effects of XOFLUZA.

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The four oldest coaches to raise the Lombardi Trophy are (this page) Tom Coughlin and (opposite page, left to right) Bill Belichick, Dick Vermeil, and Pete Carroll.

Elsa/Getty Images

PEER SAGES

EVEN AS DYNAMIC YOUNG HEAD COACHES ENTER THE GAME, SIDELINE EXPERIENCE REMAINS A VITAL ASSET ON SUPER BOWL SUNDAY.

BY KIMBERLY JONES

The morning of Super Bowl XLVI, Tom Coughlin's grandchildren crashed his hotel room, sat on his lap, and doodled on his game plan cards with crayons.

Yes, really.

Hours later, Coughlin's New York Giants defeated the New England Patriots to become Super Bowl champions for the second time in five years.

"Getting pictures with our children and their families the morning of the game, those are all very dear memories to me," Coughlin says. "The idea of (game-day) pressure? I really didn't feel it."

Coughlin had little anxiety because his team, led by quarterback Eli Manning, had come to emulate him: detail-oriented, focused, prepared.

"I'll never forgot those practices that week, the ball didn't even touch the ground," Coughlin says. "The players used to always bust my chops about [my rules requiring them] to be five minutes early. In the playoffs, they'd be out on the field 10 minutes early, saying, 'Coach, what are you doing? Let's get started.'

"Pressure? No. Was there excitement? Oh, yeah."

That day, Feb. 5, 2012, in Indianapolis, Coughlin became the oldest coach to win a Super Bowl, at age 65 years, 158 days. Interestingly, the man who stood across the field from him at the RCA Dome, the Patriots' Bill Belichick, now ranks as the second-oldest, having won Super Bowl LI over the Falcons at the age of 64 years, 295 days.

Dick Vermeil (age 63 years, 92 days when he won Super Bowl XXXIV with the Rams), Pete Carroll (62 years, 140 days when he led the Seahawks to the Super Bowl XLVIII title), and Weeb Ewbank (61 years, 251 days when he guided the Jets to their monumental Super Bowl III upset) round out the top five.

In a league that seemingly trends young – in 2017, 30-year-old Sean McVay of the Rams became the youngest head coach in modern NFL history – coaching experience can be a huge factor on Super Bowl Sunday.

Not that Coughlin, now 72 and the executive vice president of football operations for the Jacksonville Jaguars, has ever focused on age.

"I mean, how old was I when I won?" he says. "I still don't feel chronologically the number that's associated with me. I don't feel it and I never have.

"It's about your attitude, your mentality, your energy level, your excitement about being in the position that you're in. It's about overcoming obstacles and being able to enjoy the circumstances you're surrounded by, even before the final outcome is determined."

Such wisdom has come from decades of experience. But experience alone does not make a Super Bowl-winning coach. When Jon Gruden (39 years, 162 days) led the Buccaneers to victory in Super Bowl XXXVII, he became the youngest head coach to win the sport's biggest game. Six years later, Mike Tomlin (36 years, 323 days), an assistant on Gruden's Tampa Bay staff, eclipsed his former boss when the Pittsburgh Steelers captured Super Bowl XLIII.

"Really, that was kind of a footnote to me, to be honest with you," Tomlin says, adding that the experience of working under Gruden had provided a blueprint. "I was able to see him, watch him do it, and work

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AP Images

Top to bottom: Patriots coach Bill Belichick talks with quarterback Tom Brady (12) during Super Bowl LI. The Seahawks' Pete Carroll looks on during Super Bowl XLVIII. Rams coach Dick Vermeil (left) chats with the Titans' Jeff Fisher after Super Bowl XXXIV. Jets coach Weeb Ewbank is congratulated by QB Joe Namath (12) following Super Bowl III.

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This page: Jon Gruden coached the Buccaneers to the Super Bowl XXXVII championship (top left) and then returned to the sidelines in 2018 as coach of the Raiders (bottom left). When Mike Tomlin (above) guided the Steelers to victory in Super Bowl XLIII, he unseated Gruden as the youngest coach to win the Super Bowl. **Opposite page:** Two of the biggest influences on five-time Super Bowl champion coach Bill Belichick are his late father, Steve (left), and Bill Parcells (right), who won two Super Bowls at the helm of the Giants.

for him in that process. So I think [age] was less of an issue for me because of that experience."

In the coaching fraternity, often there is common ground, regardless of experience or background. Coughlin and Tomlin have struck up a friendship over the years. Coughlin lauds Tomlin's natural leadership qualities and his ability to learn quickly and relate well to his players: "Mike is a very good statesman for that franchise."

Tomlin believes the two men, born 26 years apart, are far more similar than different, "because we love football and we can't hide that and that is something that transcends generations."

Surely, the love of the game – and desire to coach – can be passed from one generation to another. During last year's Super Bowl week, Belichick credited his late father for instilling lessons about football and life that endure. Steve Belichick coached at the college level for 43 years, most of it at the Naval Academy as a backfield coach and scout.

"That's who I learned from," the veteran Patriots coach said. "Working hard, doing your job, paying attention to details, treating the players as fairly and honestly as you can treat them. If it's good, it's good. If it's bad, it's bad. Just being honest with them. I would say all of those things I got from a lot of coaches, but I certainly got it from [my dad]."

Belichick and Coughlin spent time together on Bill Parcells' Giants staff, including the team's 20-19 win over the Buffalo Bills in Super Bowl XXV. That the two would later match wits in two Super Bowls was somewhat poetic, considering both benefited from the tutelage of Parcells, a Hall of Fame coach.

"I learned a great deal during the early years of my coaching career and was fortunate to have exposure to several different teams, coaching staffs, and players, with a wide variety of philosophies and styles," Belichick says. "It made me understand and appreciate the many different methods of constructing teams and competing at a high level.

"Another beneficial aspect of the early years of my career was being able to coach all areas of the team – offense, defense, and special teams,"

Tim Cannell/Getty Images

Al Messerschmidt/AP Images

he adds. "That has served me extremely well."

For Coughlin, his time as a Giants assistant paved the way for him to return later as head coach because he understood this truth: "I learned that you can't be Bill Parcells. You have to be who you are."

Coughlin paused. "And then there's winning," he adds. "There's nothing like winning."

Both Carroll and Vermeil enjoyed winning at different levels.

Carroll joins Jimmy Johnson and Barry Switzer as the only coaches to win a college football national championship and a Super Bowl. For Carroll, his time at USC helped him to hone the positive reinforcement coaching principles he believes in. Particularly helpful, he says, was reading the memoir by late UCLA men's basketball coach John Wooden, *Wooden: A Lifetime of Observations and Reflections On and Off the Court*. It resonated with Carroll that Wooden coached for 17 years before winning his first national championship.

Carroll's emphasis on fun and competition at practice has included themed days – including "Competition Wednesday" and "Turnover Thursday" – and blaring music to increase the energy level and to reinforce the importance of focusing despite distractions.

"It basically comes down to taking care of the people in your program and making them the best they can be," Carroll told *Sports Illustrated* in 2014.

Vermeil, meanwhile, believes that he was prepared for the NFL environment – and two Super Bowl appearances – in part because he had coached in high school and junior college championship games and led UCLA to a Rose Bowl victory.

"I learned a lot about preparation for big games through being in those environments, even though it wasn't the NFL," Vermeil says. "For me at that time, it was equivalent, and I carried some of that over to the Super Bowl preparation (with the Eagles) in 1980."

Vermeil, however, admits he did "feel the pressure" in that Super Bowl.

"I was probably way too intense," he admits, lamenting his team's Super Bowl XV loss to the Oakland Raiders. "Both by nature and also by the environment created by such a big game at that point in my life."

Vermeil, of course, would get another chance … after spending 14 years out of coaching and in the broadcast booth.

"For me, broadcasting was a great release," he says. "I was able to evaluate what other head coaches were doing, both in college and at the pro level. It really was a nice education. I learned a lot from all of them, watching them work, watching their practices, studying their game films. It kept me close to the game."

Vermeil understands Gruden's return to the sidelines this season as coach of the Raiders. After nine years in broadcasting, Gruden told *Sports Illustrated* that despite trying rumba dance classes and living on a golf course, he "got tired of sitting in a dark room, watching tape by myself. I got to go compete."

"…WINNING A SUPER BOWL DOESN'T CHANGE YOU PERSONALLY AS A COACH. IT JUST CHANGES HOW PEOPLE EVALUATE YOU."
– DICK VERMEIL

Vermeil always believed he would coach again, too. Of the 14 years he was out of coaching, he says he was offered a head coaching job in 13 of them. When he did return, he led the St. Louis Rams and their "Greatest Show on Turf" to victory in Super Bowl XXXIV over the Tennessee Titans.

That moment, like his other victorious moments, was joyous. And it has endured.

"I have found out," Vermeil says, "winning a Super Bowl doesn't change you personally as a coach. It just changes how people evaluate you.

"Every time I'm introduced, I'm introduced as a Super Bowl-winning coach," he chuckles. "I don't remember ever being introduced as a Super Bowl-losing coach."

As Coughlin says, and surely the others would attest, when it comes to the Super Bowl, there's nothing like winning.

***Kimberly Jones** is a reporter at NFL Network and a WFAN sports radio host in New York City.*

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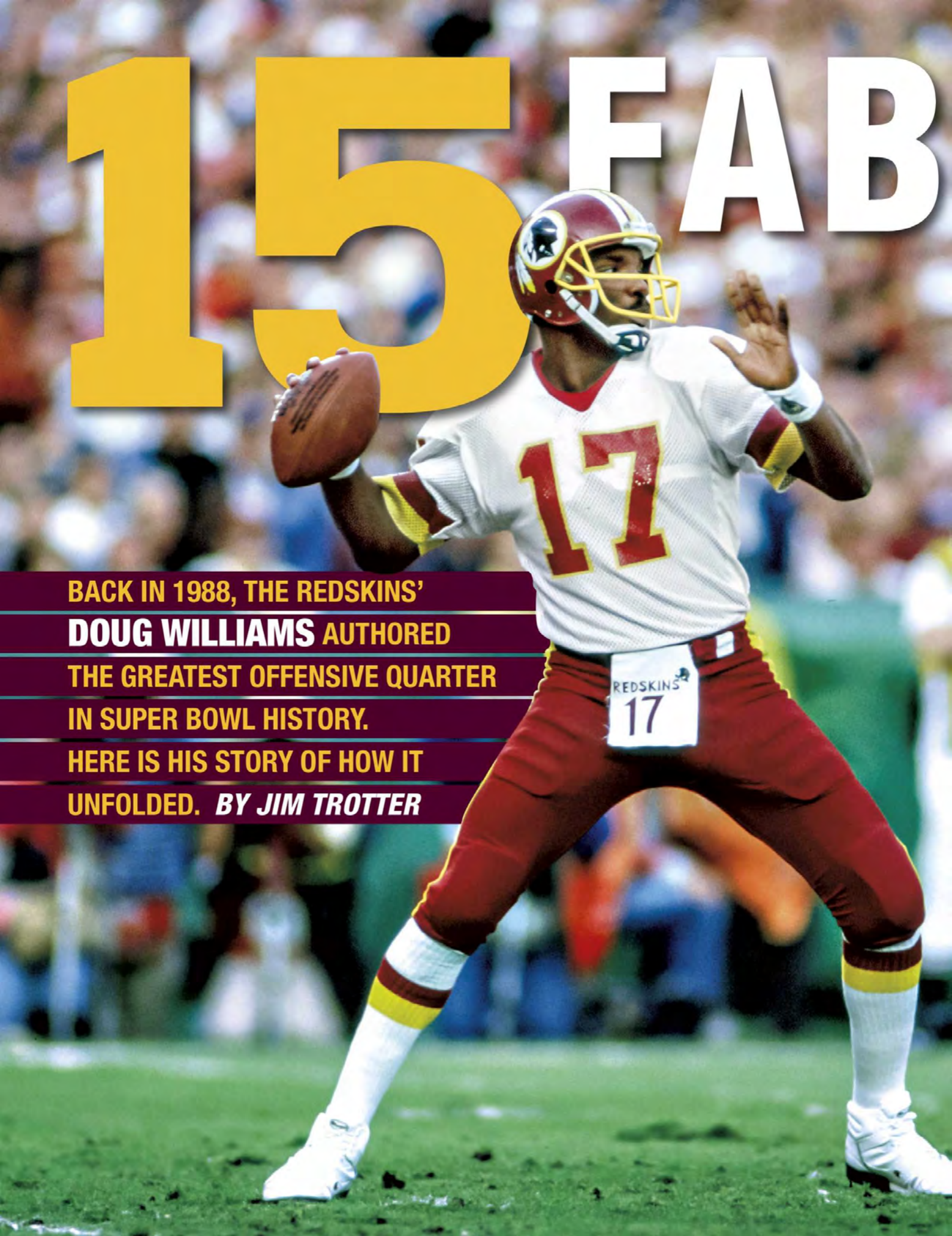
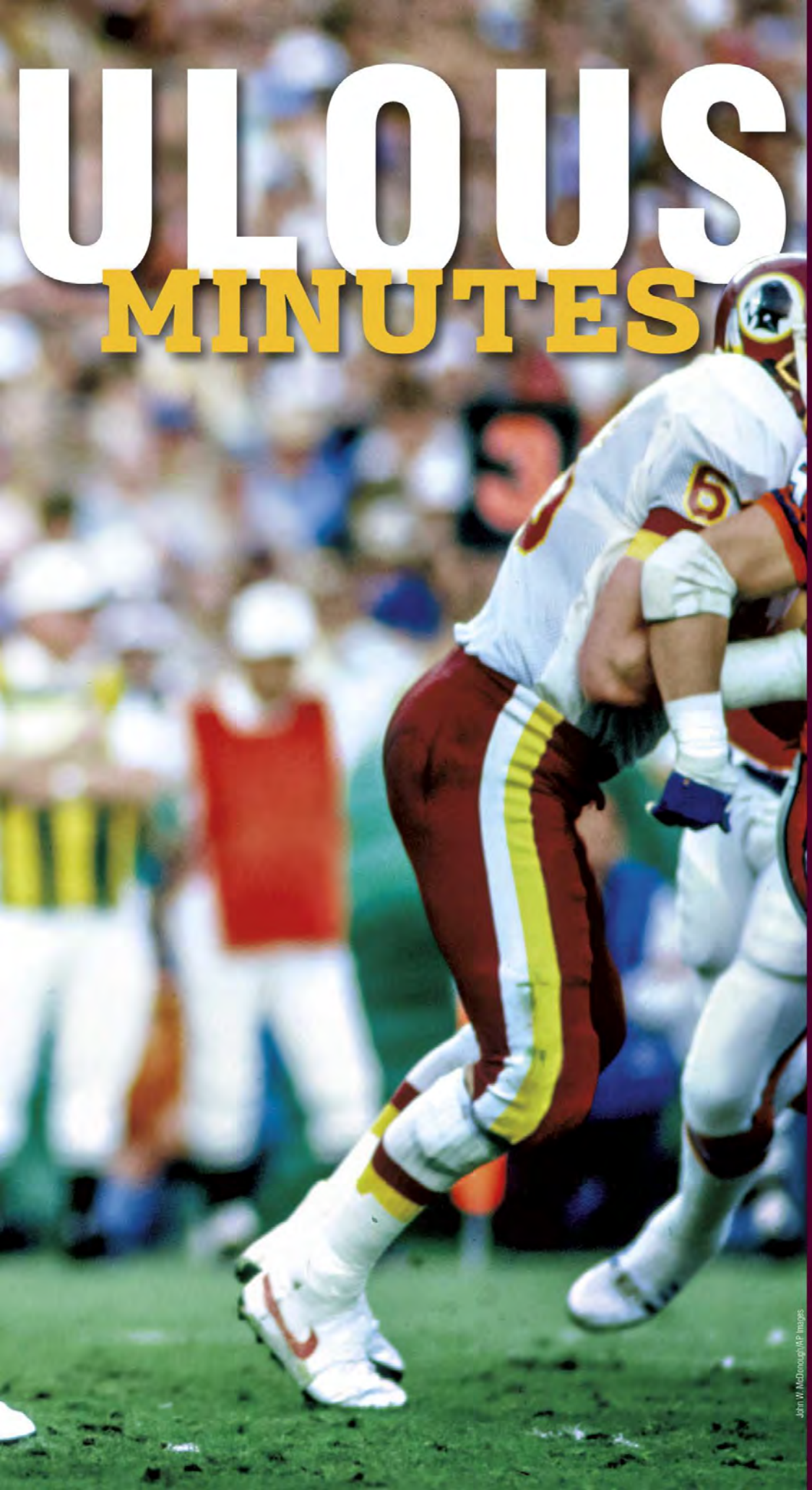


BACK IN 1988, THE REDSKINS' DOUG WILLIAMS AUTHORED THE GREATEST OFFENSIVE QUARTER IN SUPER BOWL HISTORY. HERE IS HIS STORY OF HOW IT UNFOLDED. ***BY JIM TROTTER***

ILOUS MINUTES



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IT'S A LAZY AUGUST MORNING and Doug Williams is relaxing on an oversized couch in his corner office at the Washington Redskins' training facility. There's a wall of windows behind him that provides a clear view to the practice fields, but it is the sight of a manicured field on a computer screen in front of him that brings a contented smile to his face.

It was on this field in January 1988, on a mostly cloudy 61-degree afternoon in what was then Jack Murphy Stadium, that Williams made history several times over in the Redskins' 42-10 Super Bowl XXII victory over the Broncos. The former Grambling State star became not only the first African-American quarterback to play in the Super Bowl, but also the conductor of the highest-scoring quarter in its history, an astounding 35-point second-quarter outburst that required just 18 plays.

A lot has changed since that day in San Diego, but the details of the performance are as clear in his mind as the replays scrolling across the screen. It is one reason Williams rarely rewatches the game on his own.

"I don't have to because I can still visualize what's taking place and see it in my mind's eye," Williams says. "I can see Ricky Sanders coming across in motion and going back across the field, then Mark Haynes trying to come up and press him and missing him. I can see Ricky going by him and running free up the sideline. I can see Gary Clark beating safety Steve Wilson one-on-one on a corner route. I can see Clint Didier running a corner route for a touchdown with

Washington Redskins

AJ Messerschmidt/AP Images

Left: Thirty-one years after his record-breaking Super Bowl XXII performance, Doug Williams is the Redskins' senior vice president of player personnel. **Right:** Ricky Sanders (83) started Washington's 35-point second-quarter onslaught by catching an 80-yard touchdown pass from Williams. He would add a 50-yard scoring grab later in the quarter.

the linebacker trailing. I can see Timmy Smith break wide open up the middle on a 50 BANG for the score."

The smile on Williams' face seemingly grows wider with each play and each name. At that point, we decide to hit the "play" button and watch the network broadcast of the record-setting quarter. The first voice one hears is Al Michaels, who reintroduces Frank Gifford and Dan Dierdorf, his booth mates. Williams chuckles with satisfaction. He knows what is about to come, but it never gets old for him because few, if any, ever imagined he would be in such a situation.

Williams and longtime friend James Harris (who had an 11-year NFL career as a quarterback for the Bills, Rams, and Chargers) refer to the journey as the "the road less traveled." Williams went from being a first-round pick of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in 1978 to playing in the USFL just six years later. After three seasons in the upstart league, he was back in the NFL with the Redskins, where in 1987 he battled Jay Schroeder for the starting job.

And then, after persevering through all of that to help Washington reach the Super Bowl, he found himself writhing on the stadium grass late in the first quarter.

"If you look at the replay of when I got hurt, you'll see the trainer come out and attempt to put his hand on my knee, which I hyperextended," Williams says. "I told him, 'Don't touch me, because if the good Lord lets me get up, I'm going to finish this game.'"

Williams got up, limped off the field, and was examined on the sideline. When the Redskins got the ball back early in the second quarter, head coach Joe Gibbs approached.

"Douglas, you ready?" Gibbs said.

"He was the only one who called me that," Williams recalls. "I looked at him and said, 'Yeah, coach.'"

"Ok, we're going to get this sucker rolling," Gibbs said.

Williams, currently a senior vice president of player personnel with the Redskins, leans closer to the computer screen and smiles. Then he provides his own soundtrack to an historic 15 minutes:

[took possession with 14:17 remaining; 1 play, 80 yards]

"The first play in the quarter was actually just a routine hitch, a 17-yard pass, where the receiver goes down, turns around, and – bam! – gets the ball. The pass could have gone to either side. It was my decision. But Mark Haynes, the Broncos' cornerback, came up to press **Ricky Sanders** on the play. Our teachings were if a cornerback comes up to press on a hitch, the route automatically turns into a fade. When I faked the handoff, I could already see that Haynes had missed Ricky and Ricky had gone by him. He had like five yards on him. It was

"YOU DON'T GO IN THERE AND SAY, 'WE'RE GOING TO SCORE, ON AVERAGE, EVERY 3.5 TIMES WE SNAP THE BALL.'"

– DOUG WILLIAMS

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just a matter of putting the ball up and letting Ricky go get it. Ricky could run like the wind and he got under it and he was off to the races. Eighty yards. Touchdown.

"We had trailed, 10-0, before that play, but we were never concerned. Two weeks earlier, when we were in Chicago for the NFC Championship Game, it was 13 below zero and we were down 14 points. And we came back and won, 21-17. In the Super Bowl, we were in ideal weather conditions and only down 10-0, so there was no panic.

"The other thing was, Chicago was more physical than Denver. We were a physical football team, and in our minds, from a physical standpoint, we felt like we were a better ball club than the Broncos. So being down 10 here wasn't even close to being down 14 in Chicago. It was a whole different mindset."

[took possession with 12:59 remaining; 5 plays, 64 yards]

"We wanted to control the game on this second series and establish our presence on the line. That's why we called three straight runs. On this particular play, the running back was wide open in the flat because they brought two guys off that side on the blitz, but **Gary Clark** was one-on-one with the safety, Steve Wilson.

"The minute I saw man coverage, I knew I was going to go to Gary instead of the running back. I knew I'd have to take the hit to deliver the ball, and I was OK with that. You've just got to take a chance as a quarterback. You either have to get it out of your hand quick to the running back, or wait for your receiver to make his break and take a chance on the TD. Give me the six. Touchdown. Twenty-seven yards."

[took possession with 7:18 remaining; 2 plays, 74 yards]

"We had been on the sideline a while, but I wasn't worried about us cooling off. We ran the counter gap, 50 counter, and **Timmy Smith** went 58 yards for the score. We were so much bigger and stronger than they were. At this point, we were able to wipe them out up front. We felt we were controlling the game. We had hit our groove.

"Joe Gibbs always said if we could rush for 150 yards, we could control the game. That was the mentality. Timmy had 126 yards at this point, which was amazing considering he might have had only 100 yards for the year.

Al Messerschmidt/AP Images

Above: Gary Clark's 27-yard touchdown grab put the Redskins ahead, 14-10, with 10:15 remaining in the second quarter. **Below:** Timmy Smith's Super Bowl-record 204 rushing yards included a 58-yard scoring run.

Al Messerschmidt/AP Images

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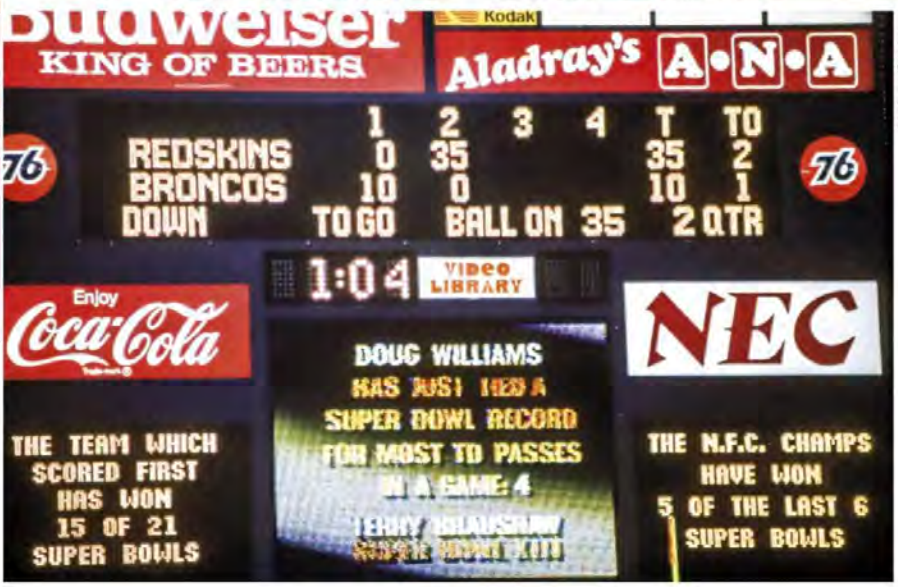

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Clockwise from above: Tight end Clint Didier capped Washington's big second quarter with an eight-yard touchdown reception. Doug Williams was named Super Bowl XXII MVP for a performance that included 340 passing yards and four TD passes. The scoreboard sums up the Redskins' record-breaking quarter that turned a 10-point deficit into a rout by halftime.

"George Rogers was the starting running back, and the staff just made the decision to start Timmy in the Super Bowl. Everybody was surprised. What the hell? A rookie? But he played great."

[took possession with 4:34 remaining; 3 plays, 60 yards]

"We were running the ball well, and on this play we faked the counter, and the safety, Tony Lilly, came up for the run and got caught up. BOOM! Too late. That left **Sanders** free deep. It was almost too easy.

"The way the game was going, we felt pretty good about what we were doing. The line felt like they were in control and the receivers were confident they could get open. Ricky had 149 yards receiving at this point."

[took possession with 2:14 remaining; 7 plays, 79 yards]

"We got the ball back after an interception by Barry Wilburn. We could not have done what we did on offense without the help of the defense, which kept getting the ball back for us. The play call here was to tight end **Clint Didier**. He ran a corner route and it was a safe throw because it was to the corner. Either your guy gets it or no one gets it. Sanders drew triple coverage on a crossing route, so that left Clint to beat one guy.

"We were up, 35-10, at halftime when offensive line coach Joe Bugel came up to me and said, 'Stud,' – he used to call me that – 'Stud, if you don't want to go the second half because of your knee, I think we got it under control. You don't have to go.'

"I told him, 'I started this and I'm finishing this one. Do you know how long it took me to get here? I'm finishing this.'"

Williams ultimately set or tied Super Bowl records for most touchdown passes (4), most yards passing (340), longest pass completion (80 yards), and longest scoring pass (80 yards).

"It's hard to imagine what took place in the second quarter," Williams reflects. "You can want to do it. You can go out on the field expecting to execute. But you don't expect it to hit like lightning like it did for us.

"We just wanted to control the football because you have to understand that there was a guy on the other sideline named (Broncos QB) John Elway, who majored in comebacks. Even with quick scores like that, we knew Denver was capable of doing the same thing.

"Our offense was geared around being able to run the ball and to control the ball and the score. We would have been happy with methodical drives of 10 plays, 12 plays and scoring to keep Elway off the field. You don't go in there and say, 'We're going to score, on average, every 3.5 times we snap the ball.'

"I've always been one to realize you can't do it alone. To do what I did, everyone had to be working in unison. That meant tremendous protection from the offensive line, the running backs doing their jobs, the wide receivers running open. It was about just executing.

"That second quarter was the epitome of execution."

Jim Trotter is a reporter/storyteller for NFL Media and author of Junior Seau: The Life and Death of a Football Icon.

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Efe Obada is a product of the NFL's Player Pathway program that attracts and develops international players. He was a member of the Panthers in 2018.

FOREIGN INVEST

Rob Tringali/Getty Images

AS THE CAROLINA PANTHERS counted down the final moments before facing the Cincinnati Bengals in a late-September clash this season, the noise and intensity levels began to rise in their locker room.

Amid that growing chaos and excitement, however, one young player retreated deep into his stall for a few moments in order to quietly reflect on a journey that could well become the subject of a Hollywood movie.

British defensive end Efe Obada was about to play in his first NFL regular-season game and he wanted to savor the moment.

"It was surreal," explains Obada, who was plucked from amateur football obscurity in the United Kingdom before embarking on an unlikely career in the NFL. "When I walked into our locker room and saw my jersey, I was overwhelmed. I teared up a little bit.

"I took a picture of my jersey and made sure I captured the moment. I walked deep into my locker, breathed a little sigh of relief, said a little prayer, and then I refocused because I knew I had to make the most of my opportunity."

INTERNATIONAL PLAYERS ARE NOW MAKING AN IMPACT ON THE NFL, AND THE LEAGUE'S PLAYER PATHWAY PROGRAM IS A BIG REASON WHY. ***BY NEIL REYNOLDS***

MENTS

Obada did just that as he enjoyed a dream debut. He registered a diving interception off a tipped pass and sacked Bengals quarterback Andy Dalton to earn NFC Defensive Player of the Week honors in a 31-21 Panthers victory.

That game was another incredible chapter in Obada's life story. He was trafficked from the Netherlands to the United Kingdom when he was 10 years old and left homeless on the streets of London with his sister.

The former warehouse worker played just five games of amateur football with the London Warriors before being offered a tryout with the Dallas Cowboys in 2015. After practice squad stops with Dallas and Kansas City, Obada was given further time to hone his skills when he was placed in the NFL's International Player Pathway Program in 2017, spending the season on Carolina's practice squad.

"I was a long way behind," Obada admits. "I'm only just making headway now and the Player Pathway Program allowed me to get better at my skills, but I didn't have to worry about getting released. The program gave me the stability I needed."

The 26-year-old defensive end has become the poster child for a program aimed at providing international athletes with the opportunity to improve their football skills and, ultimately, earn spots on NFL rosters.

Obada, British tight end Alex Gray (Atlanta Falcons), British defensive end Alex Jenkins (New Orleans Saints), and German linebacker Eric Nzeocha (Tampa Bay Buccaneers) served in the program in 2017 and returned to their respective teams this season to receive the time and expert coaching required to reach the NFL. An additional four athletes were assigned to the AFC North in 2018: German receiver/tight end Moritz Böehringer (Cincinnati Bengals), German fullback Christopher Ezeala (Baltimore Ravens), British defensive back Tigie Sankoh (Cleveland Browns), and British tight end Christian Scotland-Williamson (Pittsburgh Steelers).

NFL executive vice president of events and international Mark Waller explains, "The spirit of our international business means we are constantly trying new things. There is a spirit of reinventing and reimagining, and the Player Pathway Program is a great example of that."

Waller notes that the benefits go both ways.

"The commitment from the teams who have taken on those players has grown as they've seen the quality of the athletes and the human beings in their locker room," he says. "They see how good they are as athletes, but also how committed they are to the journey, and that is indicative of their level of values and commitment to hard work, effort, and risk taking.

"It's one thing to say that the concept would be great to have an international player and an extra resource on the roster, but that's very different from, 'Wow, these guys are awesome additions to our locker room and our team.' That's the feedback we have been getting."

One athlete who was supposed to be in the Player Pathway Program was Australian rugby league sensation Jordan Mailata, who caught the eye of NFL scouts while playing for the South Sydney Rabbitohs.

But the 6-foot-8, 346-pound giant shocked the football world when he was selected by the Philadelphia Eagles in the seventh round of the 2018 NFL Draft. It capped a rocket-like rise for the offensive tackle, who was asked how his helmet felt when he tried it on for the first time while working with international prospects at the IMG Academy in Florida.

"I don't know how it's supposed to feel," Mailata replied.

Alex Gray captained England's national youth rugby teams before switching to football.

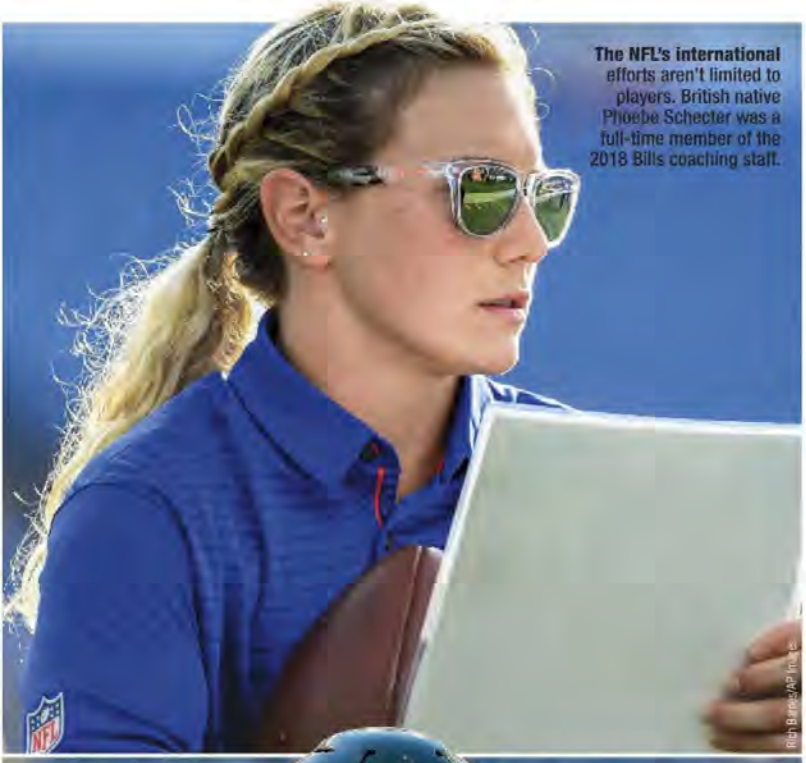
Margaret Bowles/AP Images

Mark Konezny/USA TODAY Sports

Germany's Moritz Böehringer was assigned to the Bengals this season as part of the NFL's Player Pathway program.

He wasn't joking. The 21-year-old, who had never even watched an NFL game, let alone try on a football uniform, progressed well enough to be activated by the Eagles during the 2018 season.

NFL head of football development Will Bryce says, "From the second we got on the field with Jordan, you could see he was special because of his natural athletic ability and because he was all ears. He showed himself to be very intelligent, hardworking, and hard on himself. He wants to be great.



The NFL's international efforts aren't limited to players. British native Phoebe Schecter was a full-time member of the 2018 Bills coaching staff.

Jordan Mailata was chosen by the Eagles in the 2018 NFL Draft despite having never played a down of football.

"We couldn't be prouder of him. He's not the finished product yet, but the sky is the limit – he has everything you would want in a starting left tackle."

Bryce is not alone in that observation. Former NFL offensive lineman Ross Tucker, now a Sirius NFL radio presenter and host of the Ross Tucker Football podcast, says, "I no longer think Mailata is going to be a starting left tackle in the NFL. I think he is going to be an All-Pro. I'm borderline obsessed with this dude at this point. It's crazy. The Eagles are going to go right from (starting left tackle) Jason Peters to Peters Jr."

Professional athletes like Mailata who excelled in other sports are eyeing the Player Pathway Program with increasing frequency. Falcons tight end Gray captained England's rugby teams at the Under-16, Under-18, and Under-20 levels, and played for the Newcastle Falcons and London Irish. Steelers tight end Scotland-Williamson converted to football just last year after playing professional Premiership Rugby for the Worcester Warriors.

They will be joined in 2019 by one of England's most exciting rugby players when London Wasps wing Christian Wade turns his attention to the NFL and its Player Pathway Program. The prolific try-scorer, who represented England during his rugby career, stresses, "The decision to give up my career in rugby was a difficult one. But I've now got the opportunity to go into the Player Pathway Program like we've seen some other guys do. This is something I don't take lightly – it's a huge mountain to climb. My aim is to give it my best and compete with these guys in the NFL."

As the Player Pathway Program creates more high-profile stories like Obada, Mailata, and Wade, those who are blazing the international trail are going to be held up as role models.

Obada relishes that reality, explaining, "I'm proud that I came through the Player Pathway Program and would love to see more people follow my path. One of my intentions is to motivate people and to really get this program going.

"I'm aware that people are looking up to me now. The higher you climb up, the more you have to live up to that line from *Spider-Man* … with great power comes great responsibility."

Gray adds, "Efe played five games for his local team and it shows kids that there is an end game for young players. The program proves that if you're willing to work hard and to dream big enough, there is now a pathway for you to make it to the NFL."

The man who helped found the Player Pathway Program – Aden Durde – was one of two British coaches in the NFL in 2018. Durde worked for the Atlanta Falcons, while Phoebe Schecter just completed her first season with the Buffalo Bills.

"I want to see more men and women from around the world playing and coaching in the NFL," Durde says. "There are talented players and teachers everywhere, and we've just got to find them and give them the opportunity to be seen.

"One of my passions is to break down these barriers. I'm trying to break down barriers in coaching and the players are breaking them down as well. It's just becoming a bit more normal in every area. It will continue to grow. If a player or a coach can help a team, it doesn't matter where they come from."

With that in mind, it appears the Player Pathway Program will go from strength to strength in the coming years.

Waller notes, "I see the program growing in the same way that I see the broader international agenda growing. What we're just starting to scratch the surface of now is the huge potential that our sport has, and if it has that potential for fans, the same will apply to athletes."

And that path will lead to more players making incredible journeys to the NFL … with stories that are sure to match.

***Neil Reynolds** presents NFL coverage on Sky Sports TV in the United Kingdom and is the host of the Inside the Huddle podcast. He has written for nfl.com, the Pro Football Hall of Fame, and a host of publications in the U.S. and U.K.*

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BY MOVING ITS ANNUAL PLAYER DRAFT FROM CITY TO CITY, THE NFL HAS CREATED ANOTHER FAN-FRENZIED, MUST-SEE EVENT.

BY MIKE GARAFOLO

THE SUPER BOWL OF SPRING

Doug Benc/AP Images

Derek Barnett stood on the Philadelphia Art Museum steps in April 2017, holding an Eagles jersey with his last name and the number "1" on the back while peering out at a crowd of about 100,000 fans, most of whom were cheering his selection by the hometown team in the first round of the NFL Draft.

Little did Barnett know he'd be back on those steps, the ones Rocky Balboa made famous, exactly 288 days later at the end of a parade to celebrate the Eagles' first-ever Super Bowl title.

No one has experienced the highs of the NFL's two biggest events the way Barnett has, and in such short order. So which one does he believe is better?

"Oh, the Super Bowl, hands down," says the defensive end, who recovered Tom Brady's fumble to help seal the Eagles' victory over the Patriots in Super Bowl LII. "You get some nice bling. A lot of veterans work super hard to get there and a lot of guys don't ever get there. I was fortunate to come to a great team I knew could compete right away."

Barnett is correct. There's nothing like the Super Bowl, a weeklong festival of parties, events, and activities leading up to the most anticipated annual event in American sports.

However, the draft has closed the gap in recent years, particularly since the NFL has left the comforts of New York City and taken the show on the road to Chicago, Philly, Dallas, and, in a little more than two months, Nashville. What used to be just another event in "The City That Never Sleeps" is now the center of attention for the host city fortunate enough to beat out other contenders in a Super Bowl-esque bidding process.

From interactive exhibits that let fans do things like run a 40-yard dash against an LED screen of an NFL player, to community events, football clinics, musical performances, and other unique attractions spread out over nearly a week, the NFL Draft has become a fan-driven entertainment extravaganza.

Which, of course, was the league's goal when the event left New York City a few years ago, partly out of necessity.

Back in 2015, representatives from Radio City Music Hall in Manhattan informed the NFL they were planning to bring back their Spring Spectacular show the following year, meaning the venue wouldn't be available for the draft. Other options in New York were considered, but the league decided to try another city for the first time since 1965.

Chicago mayor Rahm Emanuel campaigned hard for the event and got it. The Windy City added a few outdoor elements, such as "Selection Square," where the picks were being recorded, and a "Draft Town" park for fans – spanning 900,000 square feet in Grant Park and Congress Plaza.

In 2017, Philadelphia moved the whole event outdoors to the Art Museum steps, with fans and festivities spilling onto the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. An estimated 250,000 people showed up over the draft's three days despite unseasonably hot weather.

Last year, Dallas (well, technically Arlington, where Jerry Jones' monstrous AT&T Stadium served as host) drew 100,000 fans for the first round and set a ratings record as the most-watched draft in history. Studies showed that the draft generated $125 million in economic impact for the region, including $74 million in direct spending. The television success was due in part to the event being broadcast across multiple networks, including ESPN, NFL Network, and FOX.

All of this would have never seemed imaginable to those involved in the first few decades of the draft.

Andy Lyons/Getty Images

Just months after becoming the Eagles' first-round pick, Derek Barnett (left, with Roger Goodell) recovered the fumble that helped clinch the team's Super Bowl LII victory (inset).

Matt Rourke/AP Images

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Linebacker Shaquem Griffin (center) celebrates with Seahawks fans after the team selected him in the 2018 NFL Draft.

Ben Liebenberg/AP Images

Titans QB Marcus Mariota shows off the team's new uniforms during a downtown Nashville event that attracted 20,000 fans.

John Shearer/Getty Images

"In 1960, we drafted in December at the Warwick Hotel in Philadelphia, and there were six writers there," says former Cowboys executive Gil Brandt, who has been a part of the last 63 drafts. "We just drafted in a regular, small room. We wrote the names of the players on a board with chalk."

Back then, there were no fans crashing the event. Teams brought rolls of quarters with them so they could make calls on pay phones to college coaches to ask about players on their teams and others. That knowledge, combined with what they read in outlets like *Street & Smith's* magazine or the *Billings Gazette* newspaper's All-Midlands Team, was pretty much the extent of the scouting process.

If that's how little interest NFL teams were showing, one can imagine how little fans cared at that point.

However, clubs soon started to do more homework. In 1964, Brandt and the Cowboys held up the draft for six hours while they waited for a doctor to drive from Portland to Eugene, Ore., to examine Mel Renfro's wrist. (The future Hall of Famer had punched a mirror because he was so upset by the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.)

Pretty soon, teams were put on the clock to help the draft move along, which eventually made for good TV. And speaking of TV, its growth allowed more college games to become available to the public, which led to more familiarity with the players entering the pros.

And with that familiarity, more fans felt part of the draft process. Brandt says that's the hook that makes the event so popular.

"Does the fan understand when you talk about a Cover-2 defense? Can the fan understand when you talk about a 'three technique?' A lot of them can't," Brandt says. "But a fan can watch television and say, 'Gosh, that guy from Alabama looked really good. I hope my team takes him.'"

Nashville is expecting many of those fans to make the drive or take a flight into the city this spring. Long known for showing visitors a good time, Nashville has enjoyed a bit of a renaissance lately, particularly when it comes to throwing sports-related parties.

The Predators (the city's NHL team) became America's underdog in the spring of 2017 when the nation saw how invested their fans were. Although the Preds didn't beat the Penguins in the Stanley Cup Finals, Nashville won the respect of the NFL, especially after 50,000 fans jammed the streets to watch Game 6 outside Bridgestone Arena.

"We're just practicing for you," Butch Spyridon, CEO of the Nashville Convention & Visitors Corporation, wrote in an email to Peter O'Reilly, the NFL's senior VP of events. Spyridon recalls O'Reilly's reply: "We're paying attention. We know."

Spyridon had been emailing the league for a while, even when the draft was anchored at Radio City, to suggest moving it around. Last spring, with the Music City already a strong contender, Spyridon's group helped clinch the bid by drawing 20,000 spectators to downtown Nashville for the unveiling of the Tennessee Titans' new uniforms.

"Twenty thousand people to watch a fashion show?" Spyridon says with a laugh. "That's a good day."

OK, so it was more than a few players walking the runway. There were fireworks and a performance by the country music duo Florida Georgia Line. But therein lies the draw of Nashville: a dynamic music culture and party atmosphere ready to supplement this year's draft.

"Tim McGraw told us, 'If you get it, I want to be involved and I want to play,'" Spyridon says.

Nashville embraces a party so much that, when Spyridon realized the city's annual marathon was scheduled for the final day of the draft, he didn't think about pushing it to another date. He felt it would only add to what will already be a huge week.

"We're the perfect type of town for the draft; we're fan-friendly, entertainment-driven, and fun just runs through everything we do," Spyridon says. "The NFL staff said, 'We want the draft to take on the personality of the city it goes to.' When I heard that, I felt like our chances improved and it fired up the competitive juices.

"We're perfect for this. It's what we do."

Mike Garafolo *is a reporter for NFL Network and the co-host of* Good Morning Football Weekend. *A Philadelphia native who now resides in New Jersey, he has been covering the league for 16 years.*

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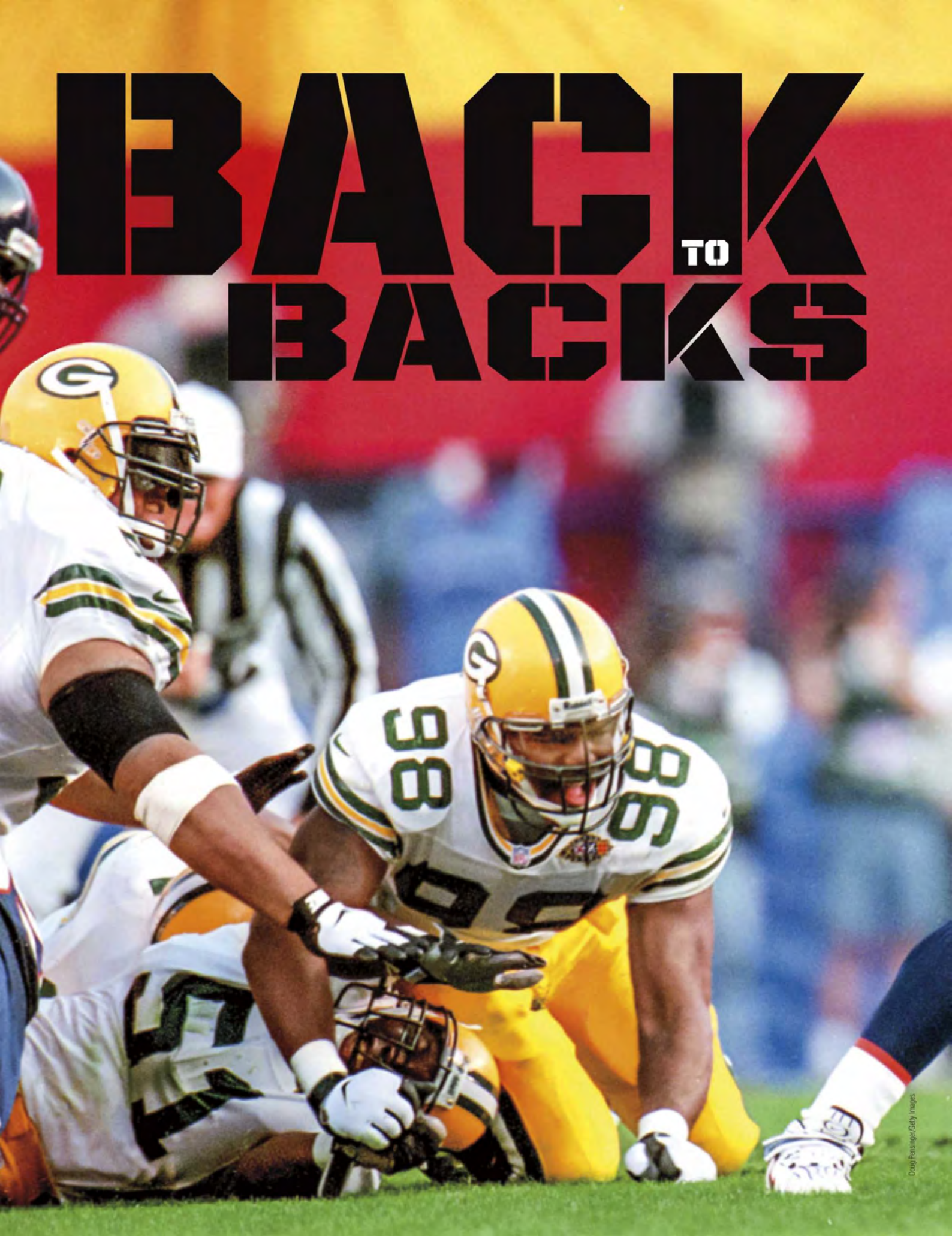

Doug Pensinger/Getty Images

TWO DECADES HAVE PASSED SINCE A RUNNING BACK WON SUPER BOWL MVP HONORS, BUT THE NFL'S EXPLOSION OF DOMINANT YOUNG BALL-CARRIERS MAY WELL END THAT DROUGHT. ***BY JEFFRI CHADIHA***

Terrell Davis is the last running back to win the Rozelle Trophy as Super Bowl MVP. He ran for 157 yards and three touchdowns in the Broncos' Super Bowl XXXII win.

Terrell Davis couldn't believe his eyes as he thumbed through a thick packet of documents last January.

As a studio analyst for NFL Media, the Pro Football Hall of Famer was sifting through research materials in preparation for Super Bowl LII, all the while hoping to find some valuable nuggets of information to use during on-air conversations.

That's when he stumbled across a fact that nearly made his jaw drop. Not only was that Super Bowl happening two decades after he won his first championship, in the Broncos' 31-24 victory over the Packers in Super Bowl XXXII, but he also was the last running back to earn the Most Valuable Player award in the league's signature event.

Davis scratched his smooth head for a second and then scanned the pages again just to be certain. Sure enough, he counted several quarterbacks, four defensive players, and a trio of wide receivers. But not a single running back.

"I couldn't believe it had been that long," Davis says.

There are plenty of reasons to explain a drought that now stretches 21 years, the most obvious being the proliferation of high-powered aerial attacks. Yet even with so much time passing since Davis' star turn, running backs have won the now named Pete Rozelle Trophy on seven occasions, second only to quarterbacks (29). There's also enough talent in the league today to suggest another Super Bowl MVP could be coming to a ball-carrier in the very near future.

The NFL's list of dynamic young runners includes Dallas' Ezekiel Elliott, the Giants' Saquon Barkley, and the Rams' Todd Gurley, which helps explain why more teams are subscribing to the notion that a strong runner is essential to securing a Lombardi Trophy.

"You have to salute the guys who've paved the way for those who are coming along like me," says Vikings second-year running back Dalvin Cook. "We have to keep that value high because we do all the dirty work along with the offensive line. We get banged on every play. We get the 25 touches. We have to be versatile to keep this position as valuable as we can."

"This league is cyclical, but I believe the running back position has always been important," contends Chiefs offensive coordinator Eric Bieniemy, who himself spent nine seasons as an NFL running back with the Chargers, Bengals, and Eagles. "If you can run the ball, it sets the tone. You look around and it seems like the league is going back to the idea that we need to find guys who can run it, maintain possession, and be willing to pound it throughout the course of the game."

That mentality used to be a familiar aspect of Super Bowl success. The 1970s featured workhorses Larry Csonka and Franco Harris, who pummeled opposing defenses and powered their teams to multiple championships. The Dolphins' Csonka won Super Bowl VIII MVP honors after his 33-carry, 145-yard effort vs. Minnesota; Pittsburgh's Harris won the award a year later by producing 158 yards on 34 attempts against those same Vikings.

Running backs continued to occupy center stage in the '80s. Marcus Allen was MVP of Super Bowl XVIII after amassing a then-record 191 rushing yards to lead the Raiders past Washington. Four years later, Timmy Smith emerged from anonymity to break that mark with 204 yards in the Redskins' Super Bowl XXII win over the Broncos.

Larry Csonka starred in the golden age of running backs during the 1970s and won Super Bowl VIII MVP honors in the Dolphins' win over Minnesota.

Dick Raphael/Getty Images

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Davis may have been the last runner to dominate a Super Bowl in the 1990s, but he wasn't the only one. Ottis Anderson was MVP of Super Bowl XXV, largely because his 102 yards on 21 carries helped the Giants control the clock in their upset of the high-scoring Buffalo Bills. NFL all-time leading rusher Emmitt Smith was integral to the Cowboys winning three championships in four years and claimed the Rozelle Award in Super Bowl XXVIII after a 132-yard, two-touchdown effort against the Bills.

Those days feel like a distant memory. The league has become so obsessed with passing that the last running back to surpass the 100-yard mark in the Super Bowl was Seattle's Marshawn Lynch in Super Bowl XLIX, when he gained 102 yards on 24 carries in his team's loss to the Patriots. The last ball-carrier to actually hit the 100-yard mark in a victory was the Colts' Dominic Rhodes, who gained 113 yards and scored a TD in Super Bowl XLI against Chicago. That was a dozen years ago.

Heading into last year's Super Bowl, both the Eagles and the Patriots had offenses that were quite similar when it came to backfield responsibilities. Neither team had a back who totaled more than 180 carries or gained more than 1,000 rushing yards in the regular season. Those teams were perfect examples why running backs haven't won Super Bowl MVP honors over the last two decades: Most ball-carriers simply don't get enough touches.

"I SEE THINGS STARTING TO GO BACK TO THE WAY IT WAS WHEN I PLAYED IN THE LEAGUE. YOU HAD THREE-DOWN BACKS THEN, BUT FOR A WHILE THE POSITION BECAME REALLY SPECIALIZED."

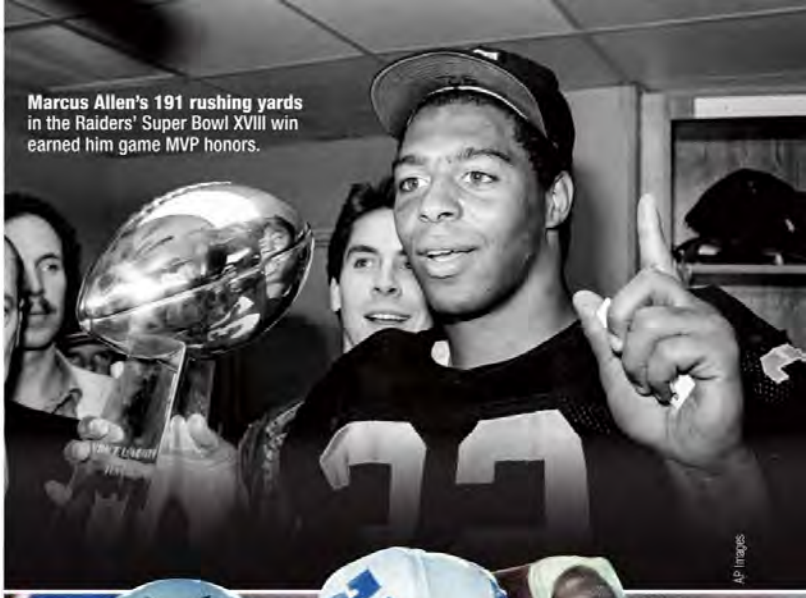
TERRELL DAVIS

That trend could be changing now that more running backs are being used in a variety of ways. When you think about the way backs are deployed in the passing game – Christian McCaffrey (107), Barkley (91), James White (87), Alvin Kamara (81), Elliott (77), and Tarik Cohen (71) all ranked in the top 30 in receptions this season – it's clear that runners are entering the league with more diverse skill sets.

"The guys now can do a lot of jobs," says John DeFilippo, who was the quarterbacks coach for last year's Eagles team. "They aren't just the old-school running back type who doesn't catch the football. You see a lot of guys who can pass-protect. And a lot of the really good running backs are big men. They can run through arm tackles and get to the second level."

Adds Davis: "I see things starting to go back to the way it was when I played in the league. You had three-down backs back then, but for a while the position became really specialized. You had your starter. You had your third-down back. You had your short-yardage back. But by doing that, the offense was also tipping its hand to the defense.

"When I played, the defense never really knew what we were going



Marcus Allen's 191 rushing yards in the Raiders' Super Bowl XVIII win earned him game MVP honors.

AP Images

Emmitt Smith helped power the Cowboys to three Super Bowl titles in the early 1990s.

Richard Mackson/Getty Images

Alvin Kamara personifies today's young running backs who also are a major factor in the passing game.

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to do because I played all three downs. You're starting to see more backs like that again because it takes a lot of pressure off the quarterbacks."

To understand the difference between the era Davis played in and today, just consider the way Denver approached its Super Bowl XXXII showdown with Green Bay. Unlike last year's Super Bowl – when New England's Tom Brady threw for 505 yards and Philadelphia's Nick Foles passed for 373 – then-Broncos head coach Mike Shanahan devised a game plan that called for Davis to get the ball 10 times within the first 15 plays. It didn't matter that Denver had a future Hall of Fame quarterback in John Elway. Davis already had averaged 141.3 rushing yards in the Broncos' three playoff wins that season and Shanahan wasn't going to ignore him in the team's biggest game.

"I knew the game rested on me and I was cool with that," says Davis, who finished with 30 carries for 157 yards, despite a second-quarter migraine, and became the first player to rush for three touchdowns in a Super Bowl. "Most times you go into a game like that hoping for a chance to do something that impacts the outcome. I had the chance to control the game. You couldn't have asked for a better situation."

The likelihood of another running back being in that position is increasing. Teams are relying more on young quarterbacks who face a tougher transition into the NFL, largely because of the rise of the spread offense at the college level. Franchises also are no longer as fearful of investing high draft picks in running backs.

As Texans defensive coordinator Romeo Crennell says: "Running backs are more plentiful, so you don't always have to look for the best. But when teams look to build and get the right puzzle piece, more franchises probably now feel like they can get over the hump if they get a top-notch running back."

The Cowboys saw the value in that strategy when they selected Elliott with the fourth overall pick in the 2016 draft. He's led the NFL in rushing twice in three seasons and has helped the Cowboys to a pair of NFC East titles. The Jaguars were looking for a similar impact when they drafted running back Leonard Fournette with the fourth overall selection in 2017. His physical, bruising presence meshed perfectly with Jacksonville's dominant defense; the Jaguars wound up reaching the AFC title game in his first year.

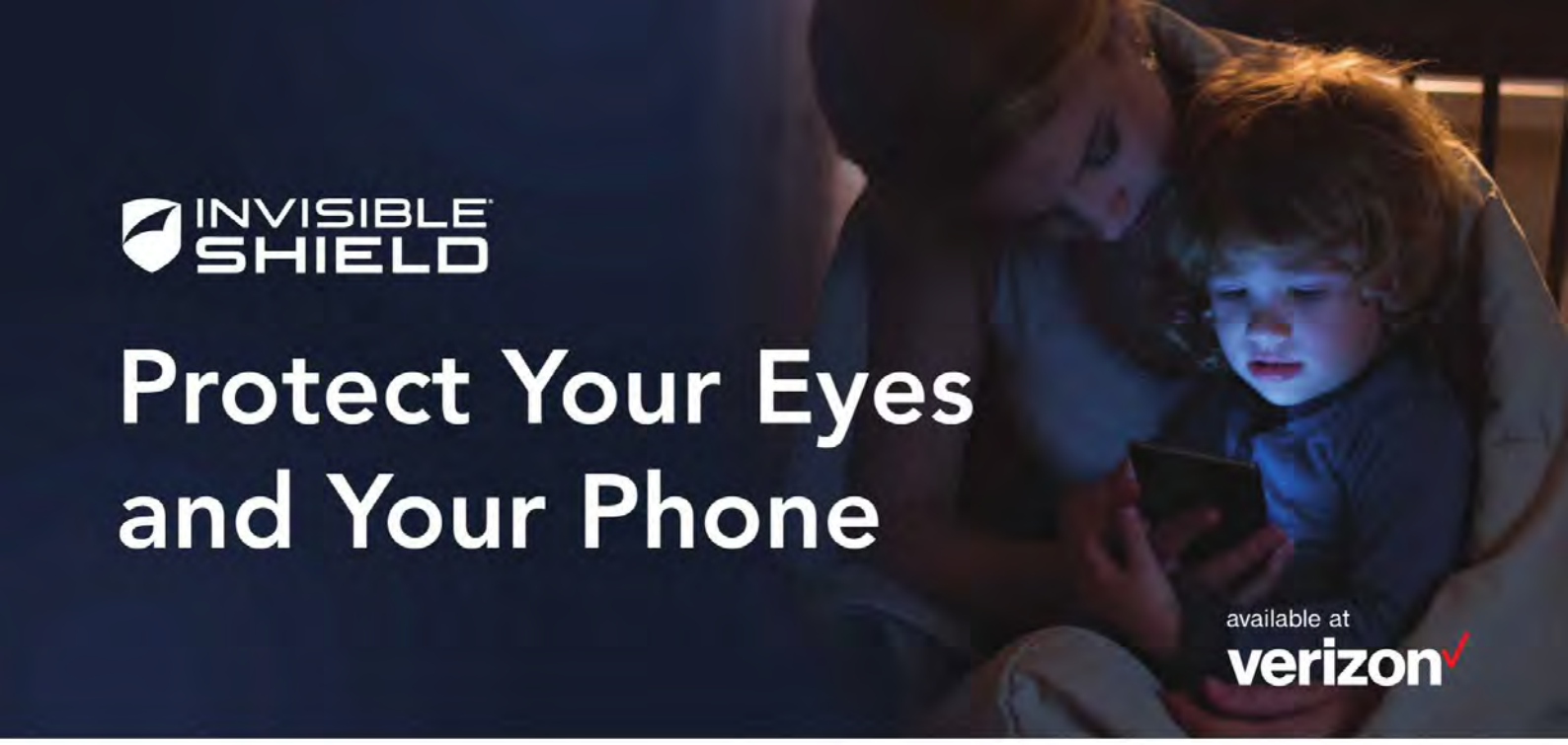
It's not difficult to see where this is heading, especially since the Giants used the second overall pick in the 2018 draft on the dynamic Barkley. He ended up being the league's second-leading rusher. Two more running backs – Rashaad Penny (Seattle, 27th pick) and Sony Michel (New England, 31st pick) – were also taken in the first round.

There used to be a day when feature backs were deemed overrated and overvalued. Those times are slowly fading away, along with the notion that a running back might never take over the Super Bowl again.

"There's a back out there who can do it," Davis says. "If Jacksonville won the Super Bowl, I'd bet you Fournette would be in the conversation. If it was Dallas, it could be Zeke; or if it was the Rams, it could be Gurley. It's crazy that it's taken this long, but I definitely think it will happen again."

Jeffri Chadiha is a senior writer for NFL Media. He also has worked for Sports Illustrated *and ESPN during his 22 years of covering pro football.*

Todd Gurley was a dynamic dual threat for the Rams in 2018, rushing for 1,251 yards, catching 59 passes, and totaling 21 touchdowns.



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AFTER A LESS THAN GLORIOUS BEGINNING, THE JETS' FORTUNES TURNED WITH THE ARRIVAL OF JOE NAMATH. FIFTY YEARS AGO, HE LED WHAT REMAINS THE GREATEST UPSET IN SUPER BOWL HISTORY.

BY GERALD ESKENAZI

TAKING FLIGHT

Fifty years – and the bizarre and the myths and the legends of the New York Jets' epic victory in Super Bowl III get bolder and bigger.

Created as the Titans in 1960, the Jets were the Giants' down-and-out cousins, a team trying to find its way in the fledgling American Football League. AFL owners knew the importance of a team in the country's media epicenter, and found nationally recognized sports announcer Harry Wismer, known for his theatrical play-by-play calling, to head up the New York franchise.

Looking to make an immediate splash, Wismer made a big deal of hiring the team's first coach – Hall of Fame quarterback Sammy Baugh. He called a press conference in his Park Avenue apartment, where he unveiled a three-piece band, dressed as cowboys, in the living room. Reporters wondered what the heck was going on.

"Gentlemen," Wismer said, "I want to introduce the new coach of the Titans – Slingin' Sammy Baugh of Texas." After Wismer spoke, the band struck up "The Eyes of Texas."

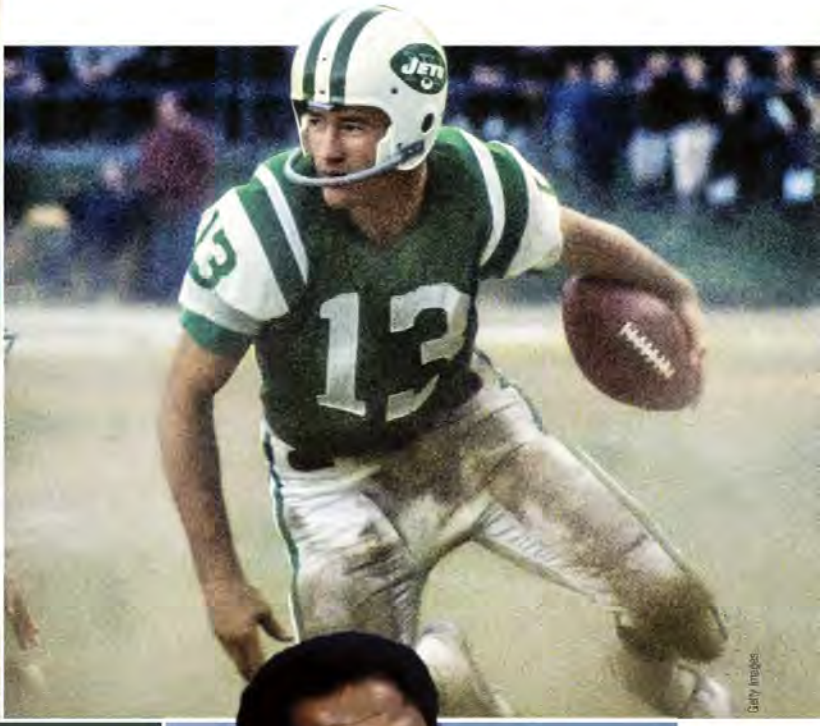
And that might have been the high point of the team's early years. Wismer became so paranoid about the Giants that he called a pal, who was a White House adviser, to complain that they were slashing the tires of Titans fans. He also inflated home attendance, once claiming a crowd of 10,000 at a game, prompting a columnist to write that "5,000 came disguised as empty seats."

Even with the league's ABC-TV deal, the Titans were cash-starved from the start. Their opening-day crowd at the Polo Grounds numbered just 5,727 paying customers. At one point during the 1961 season, Wismer ran out of money, so he simply stopped paying Baugh.

The coach smoldered after the season and couldn't wait for the 1962 campaign to begin so he could get back pay. But then he discovered, while reading a newspaper, that he had been fired.

Opposite Page: The flamboyant Joe Namath brought credibility and excitement to the Jets after being taken with the first overall pick in the 1965 AFL Draft. He then backed it up on the field, leading the Jets to the Super Bowl championship in his fourth season.

Manny Rubio/USA TODAY Sports



Top left: Weeb Ewbank is the only head coach to win both an NFL title and an AFL title. The Pro Football Hall of Famer was at the helm of the Colts for their 1958 and 1959 NFL crowns and coached the Jets to the 1968 AFC championship. **Top right:** Don Maynard is another Hall of Famer who starred for the Jets in the '60s. During the 1968 regular season, the wideout averaged nearly 23 yards per reception and caught 10 TD passes, then had two touchdown grabs in the Jets' AFL title game win over the Raiders. **Right:** Matt Snell, the Jets' first round draft pick in 1964, was instrumental in the team's rise. While Joe Namath drew much of the attention prior to Super Bowl III, it was Snell who excelled on game day, rushing for 121 yards and a touchdown.

Unsavory as it was, almost any media coverage of the Titans was welcome. For although New York had seven daily papers at the time, the team had to scramble for space, often nudged aside by the Yankees and the newly formed Mets, as well as the Knicks, Rangers, and the football Giants.

Predictably, the Titans wound up in bankruptcy court. They were lifted out by the owners of the nearby Monmouth Park racetrack, who bought the team for $1 million in 1963. The new owners changed the name to the Jets, both to give the team a new identity and as a nod to their future home, Shea Stadium, which sat in the shadows of LaGuardia Airport. They also took new colors: Kelly green and white (perhaps because the syndicate's head, Sonny Werblin, was born on St. Patrick's Day).

Werblin hired Weeb Ewbank, a foxy grandpa type who had won two NFL championships while at the helm of the Baltimore Colts, to be the team's third coach in four years. The results weren't much different; Ewbank's Jets went 5-8-1 in 1963.

Making matters more difficult was that the Mets and Jets weren't exactly cozy co-tenants when Shea Stadium opened in 1964. The baseball team didn't like their football counterparts trampling their pretty grass or smelling up their locker room. They wouldn't allow the Jets to have a home game until the baseball season ended and didn't allow them to even practice on their own field.

So one day on the team bus, while looking for a place to work out, Ewbank peered out the window on the crowded Belt Parkway in Queens. He saw a stretch of green on the side of the highway – and there, as cars sped by a few feet away and drivers gawked, the Jets practiced. Another time, while flying back from a road game, the team soared over the city's notorious jail on Rikers Island. Ewbank noted it had a big patch of green. That became the Jets' official practice field, allowing prisoners to watch.

Despite all the obstacles, the franchise's fortunes slowly took a turn for the better. Late in '63, the Jets drafted Matt Snell, an overpowering running back from Ohio State, and a crowd of nearly 45,000 showed up for the team's 1964 home opener against the Broncos, a 30-6 victory.

Yet even with Snell, speedy and dangerous receiver Don Maynard, and league interception leader Dainard Paulson (who had 12), the Jets again went 5-8-1. Then came the 1965 draft. The Jets, holding the league's first overall pick, immediately zeroed in on Alabama quarterback Joe Namath.

Namath had been a remarkable athlete in college, leading Crimson Tide coach Bear Bryant to nickname him "Babe" (for Babe Ruth). Werblin, a show business agent whose clients included Elizabeth Taylor, believed in star quality and knew he had one in Namath. He unveiled the shaggy-haired quarterback at the famed Manhattan watering hole, Toots Shor's.

Away from the cameras that day, however, something odd took place. The Jets' orthopedist, Dr. James A. Nicholas, had heard about Namath's trick knee, but didn't have the opportunity to examine him prior to the draft. So Nicholas said, "Come with me, Joe."

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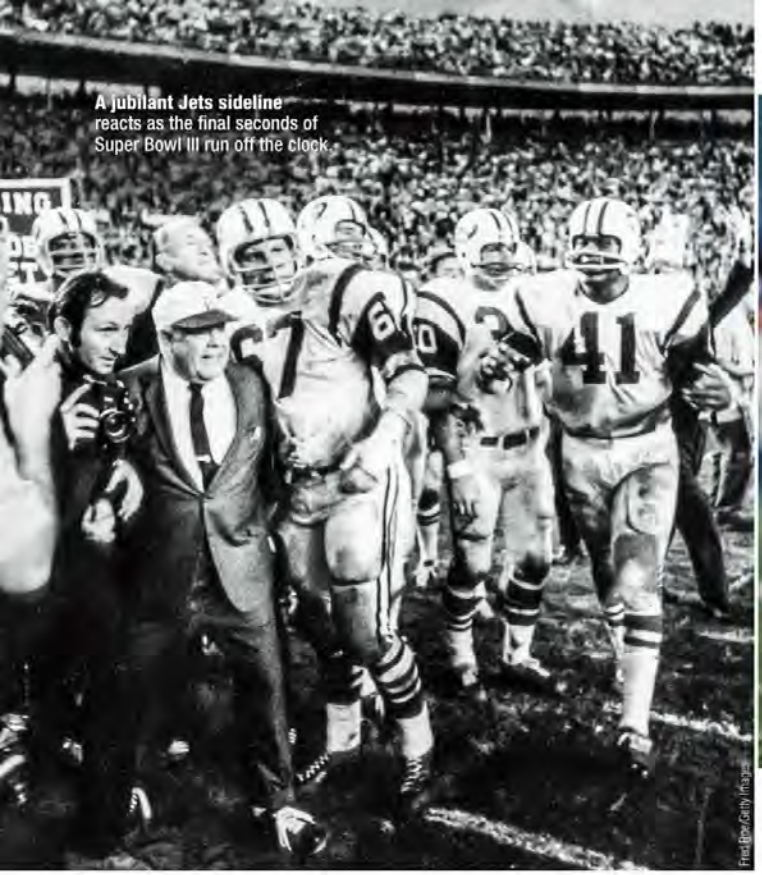

A jubilant Jets sideline reacts as the final seconds of Super Bowl III run off the clock.

Fred Roe/Getty Images

George Sauer was the Jets' top receiving target in Super Bowl III, catching eight passes for 133 yards.

Getty Images

He told Namath to sit down on a toilet seat in the men's bathroom. He moved the knee around and then said, "If I had known this before, I would have told Sonny to forget about you."

Yet while Doc Nicholas made plans to operate on Namath, all that New York could talk about was the new QB and his three-year, $427,000 contract, which included a Blue Lincoln Continental. Meanwhile, *Sports Illustrated* put Namath's face on the cover, superimposed against a shot of Times Square. Result: "Broadway Joe."

The football world – the entire sports world, really – took notice, and with good reason. Namath wore white shoes. He sported a fur coat on the sidelines. He dated starlets. In 1965, he was the AFL's Rookie of the Year. In his second season, the Jets reached .500 as Namath tossed a pro football record 471 passes. In his third season, 1967, he became the first quarterback to amass 4,000 passing yards and, finally, the Jets had a winning year at 8-5-1.

As the 1968 season began, the Jets were no longer a novelty. And by midseason, they had championship visions, owning a 7-2 record as they headed to Oakland to face the defending league champion Raiders. In what might be the second-most famous game in team history, the Jets led, 32-29, with barely a minute left to play. Back in New York, however, it was almost 7 p.m., and NBC had scheduled the movie *Heidi*, the story of an orphan girl living in the Swiss Alps. Someone in the network's hierarchy decreed: Cut away from the game; put on *Heidi*.

Big mistake. For when New Yorkers turned on the 11 p.m. news, they discovered the incredible: The Raiders had rallied for a 43-32 win.

The Jets wouldn't lose again. They captured the Eastern Division title with an 11-3 mark, and Namath then threw three TD passes to produce a 27-23 victory over the Raiders in the AFL title game, earning his team a date in Super Bowl III against the vaunted Baltimore Colts.

Few people gave them a chance against the NFL champions, who went 13-1 during the regular season and demolished the Browns, 34-0, in their league title game. Some odds-makers pegged the Jets as much as a three-touchdown underdog.

All that did was give Namath another opportunity to make headlines.

Three nights before the game, Namath accepted an award from the Miami Touchdown Club as the Pro Football Player of the Year. The brash quarterback and the Jets were miffed at the lack of respect they were receiving, which wasn't helped when someone in the crowd heckled, "The Colts will beat you!"

Calmly, Namath replied, "We're going to win the game. I guarantee it."

On Jan. 12, 1969, in front of 75,389 shocked fans at the Orange Bowl, the Jets executed one of the most iconic upsets in sports history. The mood was set on the game's second play when Namath sent the dangerous Maynard deep – the ball wiggling off the receiver's fingertips. The Colts double-teamed him after that.

That paved the way for Namath to employ his other weapons. He found sure-handed receiver George Sauer eight times for 133 yards, and he handed the ball off to Snell – 30 times in all – for 121 yards and the Jets' lone touchdown, a four-yard run early in the second quarter. Adding to Baltimore's woes were placekicker Lou Michaels, who missed two early field goals, and quarterback Earl Morrall, the NFL's Most Valuable Player, who was picked off three times before halftime.

Jim Turner kicked three second-half field goals to give the Jets a comfortable lead, and a late Colts touchdown only served to make the final score a bit more respectable: Jets 16, Colts 7.

"That game made football what it is today," Colts halfback Tom Matte told *Sports Illustrated* years later. "Everyone thought the NFL would dominate; that game proved we couldn't. It really helped football, and it gave everybody credibility in the AFL."

The next morning, the jubilant Jets took off for New York. But being the Jets, they forgot one thing. They left the Super Bowl trophy at their hotel.

Gerald Eskenazi *covered the New York Jets for almost half of his 44-year career at the* New York Times. *He's also written 16 books, including the seminal work on the Jets,* Gang Green.

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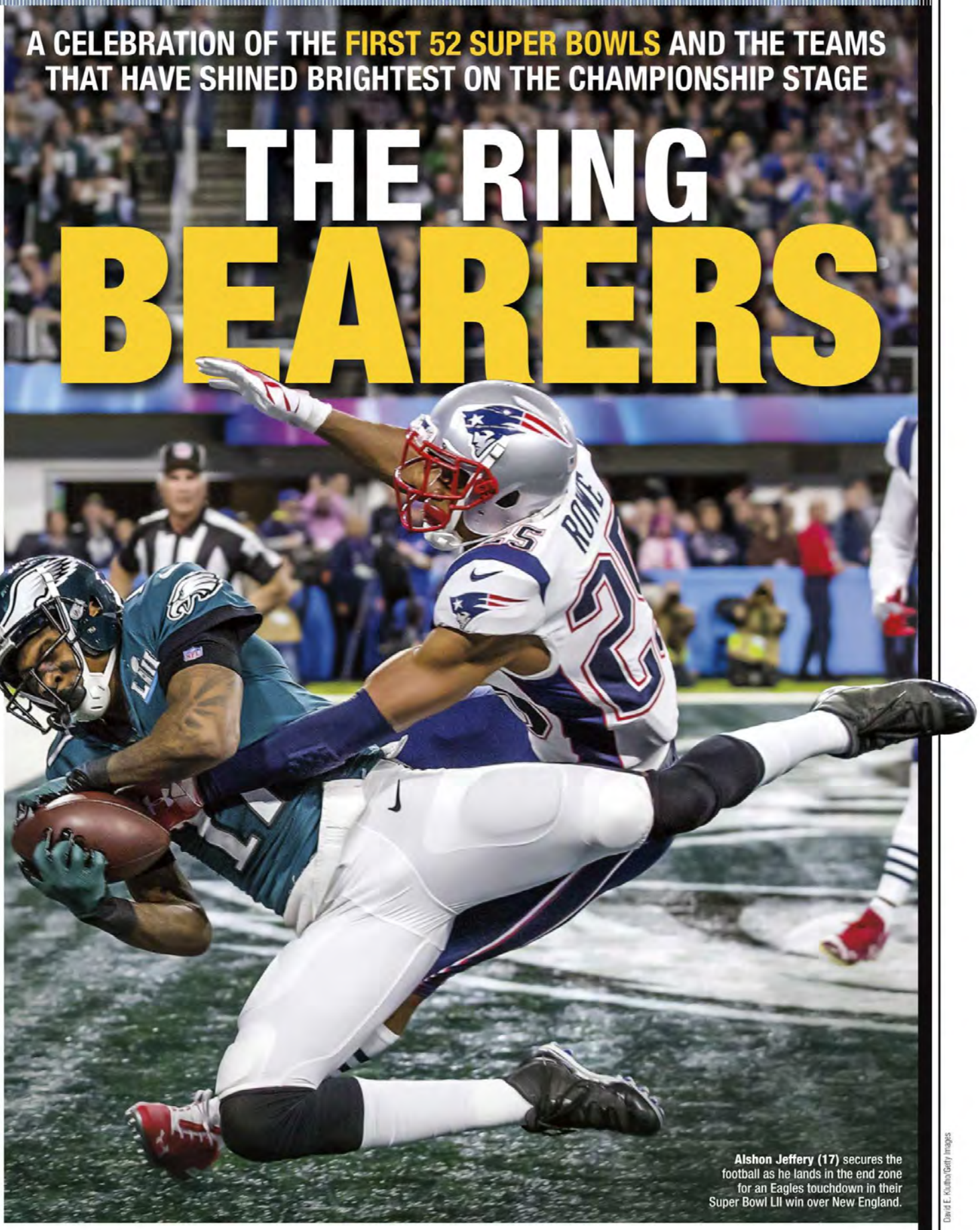
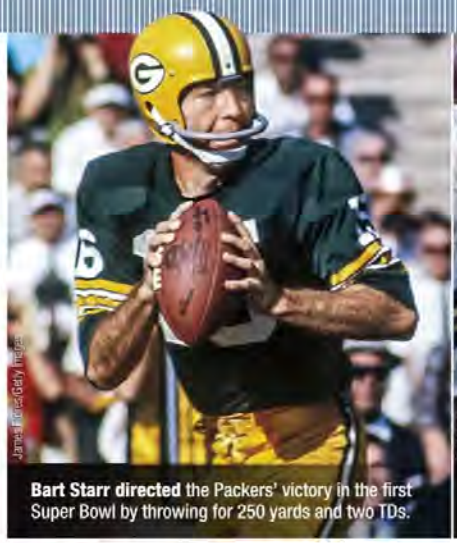
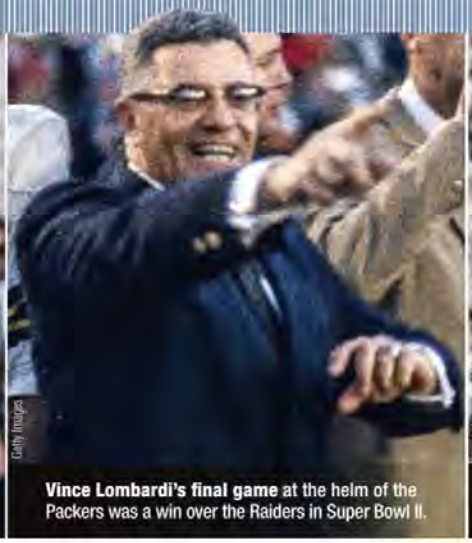


Alshon Jeffery (17) secures the football as he lands in the end zone for an Eagles touchdown in their Super Bowl LII win over New England.

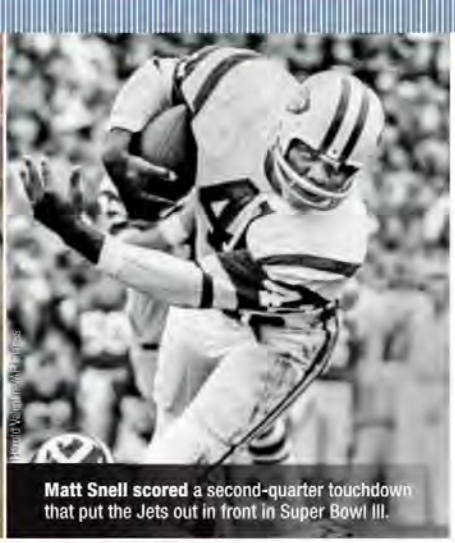
David E. Kulitha/Getty Images



Bart Starr directed the Packers' victory in the first Super Bowl by throwing for 250 yards and two TDs.



Vince Lombardi's final game at the helm of the Packers was a win over the Raiders in Super Bowl II.



Matt Snell scored a second-quarter touchdown that put the Jets out in front in Super Bowl III.

SUPER BOWL I
JANUARY 15, 1967

Green Bay Packers 35
Kansas City Chiefs 10

Attendance: 61,946

MVP: Bart Starr (QB), Packers
16 of 23 passing, 250 yards, 2 TDs

How They Got There: Green Bay – d. Dallas, 34-27 (NFL Championship). Kansas City – d. Buffalo, 31-7 (AFL Championship).

The Packers opened the Super Bowl era by defeating the AFL champion Chiefs behind the passing of Bart Starr, the receiving of Max McGee, and a key interception by safety Willie Wood. Leading by a narrow 14-10 margin at the half, Green Bay took control with three second-half touchdowns, the first of which was set up by Wood's 50-yard interception return. McGee, filling in for an ailing Boyd Dowler after having only four receptions all season, caught seven passes for 138 yards and two touchdowns. Elijah Pitts ran for two other Packers scores. All of the Chiefs' points came in the second quarter, including a seven-yard TD pass from Len Dawson to Curtis McClinton.

MEMORIAL COLISEUM
Los Angeles, Calif.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Kansas City	0	10	0	0	10
Green Bay	7	7	14	7	35

1st Quarter
GB McGee 37 pass from Starr (Chandler kick), 8:56

2nd Quarter
KC McClinton 7 pass from Dawson (Mercer kick), 4:20
GB Taylor 14 run (Chandler kick), 10:23
KC Mercer 31 FG, 14:06

3rd Quarter
GB Pitts 5 run (Chandler kick), 2:27
GB McGee 13 pass from Starr (Chandler kick), 14:09

4th Quarter
GB Pitts 1 run (Chandler kick), 8:25

SUPER BOWL II
JANUARY 14, 1968

Green Bay Packers 33
Oakland Raiders 14

Attendance: 75,546

MVP: Bart Starr (QB), Packers
13 of 24 passing, 202 yards, 1 TD

How They Got There: Green Bay – d. L.A. Rams, 28-7; d. Dallas, 21-17 (NFL Championship). Oakland – d. Houston Oilers, 40-7 (AFL Championship).

Two weeks after capturing its third consecutive NFL championship, Green Bay won the Super Bowl title for the second straight year, defeating the Raiders in a game that drew the first $3 million gate in football history. Bart Starr directed an attack that built a 16-7 halftime lead and pulled away after intermission. Don Chandler kicked four field goals for the victors and cornerback Herb Adderley capped the Green Bay scoring with his 60-yard interception-return TD. The game marked the last for Vince Lombardi as Packers coach, ending a tenure that saw him win five NFL titles and two Super Bowls.

ORANGE BOWL
Miami, Fla.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Green Bay	3	13	10	7	33
Oakland	0	7	0	7	14

1st Quarter
GB Chandler 39 FG, 5:07

2nd Quarter
GB Chandler 20 FG, 3:08
GB Dowler 62 pass from Starr (Chandler kick), 4:10
OAK Miller 23 pass from Lamonica (Blanda kick), 8:45
GB Chandler 43 FG, 14:59

3rd Quarter
GB Anderson 2 run (Chandler kick), 9:06
GB Chandler 31 FG, 14:58

4th Quarter
GB Adderley 60 interception return (Chandler kick), 3:57
OAK Miller 23 pass from Lamonica (Blanda kick), 5:47

SUPER BOWL III
JANUARY 12, 1969

New York Jets 16
Baltimore Colts 7

Attendance: 75,389

MVP: Joe Namath (QB), Jets
17 of 28 passing, 206 yards

How They Got There: New York – d. Oakland, 27-23 (AFL Championship). Baltimore – d. Minnesota, 24-14; d. Cleveland, 34-0 (NFL Championship).

Jets quarterback Joe Namath "guaranteed" victory on the Thursday before the game, then went out and led the AFL to its first Super Bowl win – beating a Baltimore team that had lost only once all season. Namath led a steady attack that dominated the NFL champions, while the Jets' defense intercepted Colts quarterback Earl Morrall three times in the first half. New York had 337 total yards, including 121 on the ground from Matt Snell. Johnny Unitas, who missed most of the season with a sore elbow, came off the bench to lead Baltimore to its only touchdown late in the fourth quarter.

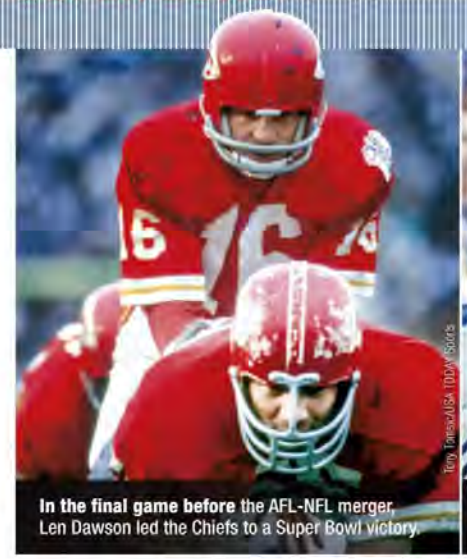
ORANGE BOWL
Miami, Fla.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
New York Jets	0	7	6	3	16
Baltimore	0	0	0	7	7

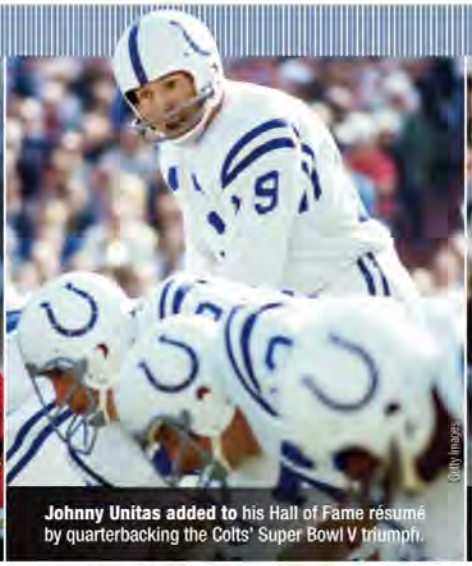
2nd Quarter
NYJ Snell 4 run (J. Turner kick), 5:57

3rd Quarter
NYJ J. Turner 32 FG, 4:52
NYJ J. Turner 30 FG, 11:02

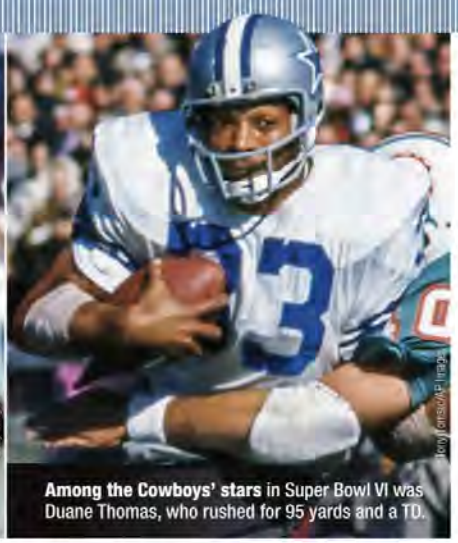
4th Quarter
NYJ J. Turner 9 FG, 1:34
BAL Hill 1 run (Michaels kick), 11:41



In the final game before the AFL-NFL merger, Len Dawson led the Chiefs to a Super Bowl victory.



Johnny Unitas added to his Hall of Fame résumé by quarterbacking the Colts' Super Bowl V triumph.



Among the Cowboys' stars in Super Bowl VI was Duane Thomas, who rushed for 95 yards and a TD.

SUPER BOWL IV
JANUARY 11, 1970

Kansas City Chiefs 23
Minnesota Vikings 7

Attendance: 80,562

MVP: Len Dawson (QB), Chiefs
12 of 17 passing, 142 yards, 1 TD

How They Got There: Kansas City – d. N.Y. Jets, 13-6; d. Oakland, 17-7 (AFL Championship). Minnesota – d. L.A. Rams, 23-20; d. Cleveland, 27-7 (NFL Championship).

The AFL squared the Super Bowl series at two victories apiece behind Len Dawson's superb quarterbacking and a powerful defense. Dawson called an almost flawless game and hit Otis Taylor on a 46-yard play for the Chiefs' final touchdown, minutes after the Vikings scored their only points. The Kansas City defense limited Minnesota's strong rushing game to 67 yards and forced five turnovers (three interceptions and two lost fumbles). Jan Stenerud provided an early spark for the Chiefs with field goals from 48, 32, and 25 yards, while Mike Garrett's five-yard TD run before halftime made it 16-0.

TULANE STADIUM
New Orleans, La.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Minnesota	0	0	7	0	7
Kansas City	3	13	7	0	23

1st Quarter
KC Stenerud 48 FG, 8:08

2nd Quarter
KC Stenerud 32 FG, 1:40
KC Stenerud 25 FG, 7:08
KC Garrett 5 run (Stenerud kick), 9:26

3rd Quarter
MIN Osborn 4 run (Cox kick), 10:28
KC Taylor 46 pass from Dawson (Stenerud kick), 13:38

SUPER BOWL V
JANUARY 17, 1971

Baltimore Colts 16
Dallas Cowboys 13

Attendance: 79,204

MVP: Chuck Howley (LB), Cowboys
2 interceptions, 3 tackles

How They Got There: Baltimore – d. Cincinnati, 17-0; d. Oakland, 27-17 (AFC Championship). Dallas – d. Detroit, 5-0; d. San Francisco, 17-10 (NFC Championship).

A 32-yard field goal by rookie kicker Jim O'Brien brought the Colts to victory in the closing seconds of Super Bowl V, the first time the game was played on artificial turf. Dallas led, 13-6, at the half, but interceptions by Rick Volk and Mike Curtis set up a Baltimore touchdown and O'Brien's decisive kick. Johnny Unitas passed for the Colts' only touchdown – a throw that caromed off receiver Eddie Hinton's fingertips, off Dallas' Mel Renfro, and settled into the hands of John Mackey, who scored on the 75-yard play. The Cowboys' Chuck Howley became the first defensive player and the first (and still only) player from a losing team to be named Super Bowl MVP.

ORANGE BOWL
Miami, Fla.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Baltimore	0	6	0	10	16
Dallas	3	10	0	0	13

1st Quarter
DAL Clark 14 FG, 9:28

2nd Quarter
DAL Clark 30 FG, 0:08
BAL Mackey 75 pass from Unitas (kick blocked), 0:50
DAL Thomas 7 pass from Morton (Clark kick), 7:07

4th Quarter
BAL Nowatzke 2 run (O'Brien kick), 7:25
BAL O'Brien 32 FG, 14:55

SUPER BOWL VI
JANUARY 16, 1972

Dallas Cowboys 24
Miami Dolphins 3

Attendance: 81,023

MVP: Roger Staubach (QB), Cowboys
12 of 19 passing, 119 yards, 2 TDs

How They Got There: Dallas – d. Minnesota, 20-12; d. San Francisco, 14-3 (NFC Championship). Miami – d. Kansas City, 27-24 in OT; d. Baltimore Colts, 21-0 (AFC Championship).

The Cowboys rushed for 252 yards and their defense limited the Dolphins to just 185 total yards as Dallas became the first team to not allow a touchdown in the Super Bowl. Chuck Howley's recovery of a Larry Csonka fumble led to a 3-0 Dallas advantage, and a Roger Staubach TD pass to Lance Alworth helped make it 10-3 at the break. After the Cowboys received the second-half kickoff, Duane Thomas keyed a 71-yard march that ended with his three-yard scoring run. Early in the fourth quarter, Howley picked off a pass that he returned to the Miami 9, and three plays later Staubach passed seven yards to Mike Ditka for the game's final touchdown. Thomas finished with 95 rushing yards and teammate Walt Garrison added 74.

TULANE STADIUM
New Orleans, La.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Dallas	3	7	7	7	24
Miami	0	3	0	0	3

1st Quarter
DAL Clark 9 FG, 13:37

2nd Quarter
DAL Alworth 7 pass from Staubach (Clark kick), 13:45
MIA Yepremian 31 FG, 14:56

3rd Quarter
DAL D. Thomas 3 run (Clark kick), 5:17

4th Quarter
DAL Ditka 7 pass from Staubach (Clark kick), 3:18

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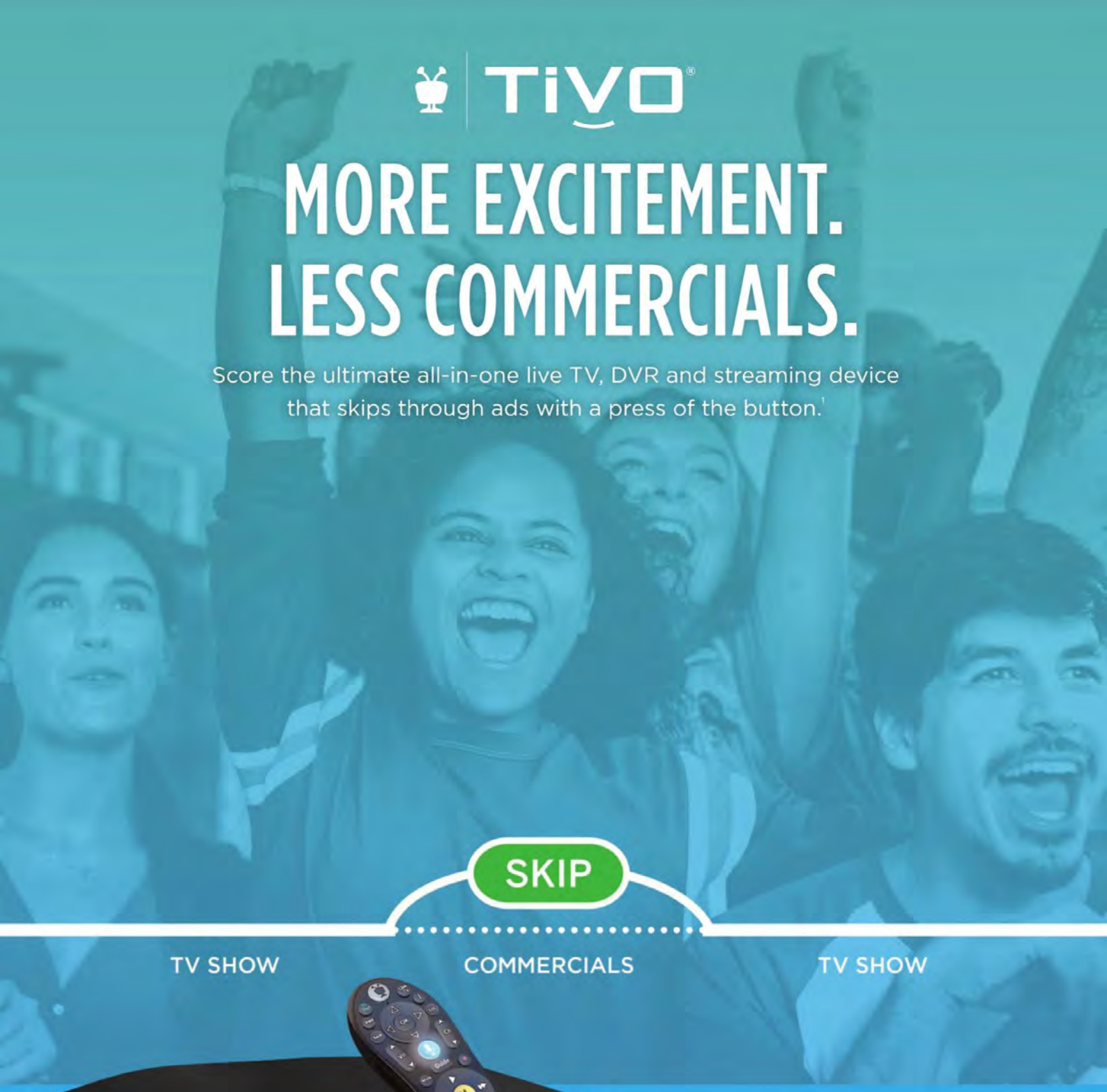

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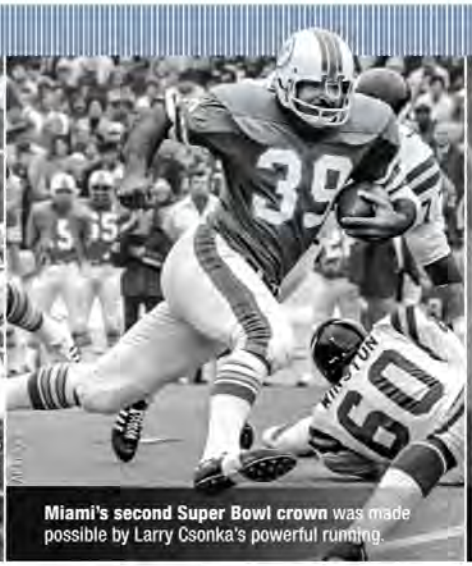
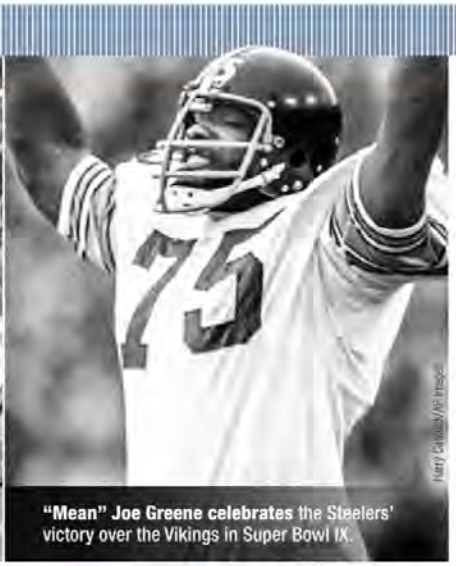
Bob Matheson (53) and Jake Scott (13) keyed a Miami defense that dominated Super Bowl VII.



Miami's second Super Bowl crown was made possible by Larry Csonka's powerful running.



"Mean" Joe Greene celebrates the Steelers' victory over the Vikings in Super Bowl IX.

SUPER BOWL VII
JANUARY 14, 1973

Miami Dolphins 14
Washington Redskins 7

Attendance: 90,182

MVP: Jake Scott (S), Dolphins
2 interceptions

How They Got There: Miami – d. Cleveland, 20-14; d. Pittsburgh, 21-17 (AFC Championship). Washington – d. Green Bay, 16-3; d. Dallas, 26-3 (NFC Championship).

On their way to perfection, the Dolphins played virtually perfect football in the first half against the Redskins. Their defense allowed Washington to cross midfield only once and their offense turned good field position into two touchdowns. Miami drove 63 yards for its first score, a 28-yard pass from Bob Griese to Howard Twilley. After the Redskins reached the Miami 48 late in the first half, linebacker Nick Buoniconti intercepted a pass that he returned 25 yards. Five plays later, just 18 seconds before intermission, Jim Kiick scored on a one-yard run. Dolphins safety Jake Scott had two interceptions, one in the end zone that ended another Redskins threat.

MEMORIAL COLISEUM
Los Angeles, Calif.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Miami	7	7	0	0	14
Washington	0	0	0	7	7

1st Quarter
MIA Twilley 28 pass from Griese (Yepremian kick),14:59

2nd Quarter
MIA Kiick 1 run (Yepremian kick), 14:42

4th Quarter
WAS Bass 49 fumble return (Knight kick), 12:53

SUPER BOWL VIII
JANUARY 13, 1974

Miami Dolphins 24
Minnesota Vikings 7

Attendance: 71,882

MVP: Larry Csonka (RB), Dolphins
33 carries, 145 yards, 2 TDs

How They Got There: Miami – d. Cincinnati, 34-16; d. Oakland, 27-10 (AFC Championship). Minnesota – d. Washington, 27-20; d. Dallas, 27-10 (NFC Championship).

The Dolphins, representing the AFC for the third straight year, scored the first two times they had the ball – on marches of 62 and 56 yards – while their defense limited Minnesota to only seven plays in the first quarter. Larry Csonka capped the initial 10-play drive with his five-yard TD bolt through right guard, and another 10-play scoring drive ended with Jim Kiick bursting one yard through the middle. Garo Yepremian's 28-yard field goal made it 17-0. The Vikings would then drive deep into Miami territory, but were stopped on fourth-and-1 from the 6 on a big hit by middle linebacker Nick Buoniconti.

RICE STADIUM
Houston, Texas

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Minnesota	0	0	0	7	7
Miami14	3	7	0	24	

1st Quarter
MIA Csonka 5 run (Yepremian kick), 5:27
MIA Kiick 1 run (Yepremian kick), 13:38

2nd Quarter
MIA Yepremian 28 FG, 8:58

3rd Quarter
MIA Csonka 2 run (Yepremian kick), 6:16

4th Quarter
MIN Tarkenton 4 run (Cox kick), 1:35

SUPER BOWL IX
JANUARY 12, 1975

Pittsburgh Steelers 16
Minnesota Vikings 6

Attendance: 80,997

MVP: Franco Harris (RB), Steelers
34 carries, 158 yards, 1 TD

How They Got There: Pittsburgh – d. Buffalo, 32-14; d. Oakland, 24-13 (AFC Championship). Minnesota – d. St. Louis Cardinals, 30-14; d. L.A. Rams, 14-10 (NFC Championship).

Pittsburgh's football history began a new chapter when the Steelers defeated the Vikings, the first of four Super Bowl titles won under coach Chuck Noll. The teams struggled through a first half that saw the only points produced when Pittsburgh's Dwight White downed quarterback Fran Tarkenton in the end zone for a safety. But it didn't take long for the Steelers to add to that lead after intermission. Minnesota's Bill Brown fumbled the second-half kickoff and Marv Kellum recovered on the Vikings 30. Four plays later, Franco Harris' nine-yard touchdown run gave his team a 9-0 lead. Pittsburgh's powerful defense permitted only 119 yards on the day, including 17 rushing yards.

TULANE STADIUM
New Orleans, La.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Pittsburgh	0	2	7	7	16
Minnesota	0	0	0	6	6

2nd Quarter
PIT Safety White 0, 7:49

3rd Quarter
PIT Harris 9 run (Gerela kick), 1:35

4th Quarter
MIN T. Brown 0 blocked punt return (kick failed), 4:27
PIT Brown 4 pass from Bradshaw (Gerela kick),11:29

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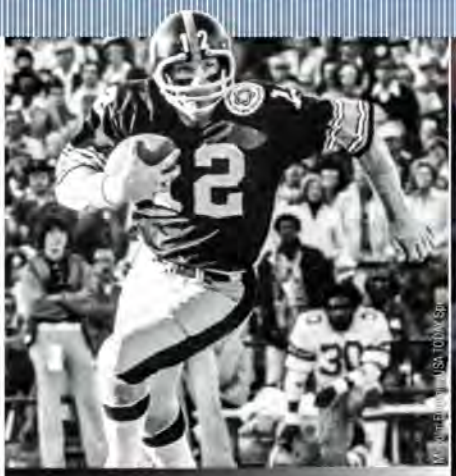


The Steelers' Super Bowl run continued behind the play of quarterback Terry Bradshaw.

John Madden brought the Raiders to the top of the football world with a win in Super Bowl XI.

The Cowboys' Butch Johnson put Super Bowl XII out of reach with a 45-yard touchdown reception.

SUPER BOWL X
JANUARY 18, 1976

Pittsburgh Steelers 21
Dallas Cowboys 17

Attendance: 80,187

MVP: Lynn Swann (WR), Steelers
4 receptions, 161 yards, 1 TD

How They Got There: Pittsburgh – d. Baltimore Colts, 28-10; d. Oakland, 16-10 (AFC Championship). Dallas – d. Minnesota, 17-14; d. L.A. Rams, 37-7 (NFC Championship).

Pittsburgh captured the Super Bowl for the second straight year, helped along by Terry Bradshaw's 64-yard touchdown pass to Lynn Swann and an aggressive defense that snuffed out a late Dallas rally. The Steelers scored on Bradshaw's seven-yard TD pass to Randy Grossman and the long throw to Swann, Roy Gerela's 36- and 18-yard field goals, and Reggie Harrison's blocked punt that went through the end zone for a safety. Dallas, though, still only trailed by four when it took possession with 1:22 to go, but had its hopes dashed on Glen Edwards' end-zone interception on the game's final play.

ORANGE BOWL
Miami, Fla.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Dallas	7	3	0	7	17
Pittsburgh	7	0	0	14	21

1st Quarter
DAL D. Pearson 29 pass from Staubach (Fritsch kick), 4:36
PIT Grossman 7 pass from Bradshaw (Gerela kick), 9:03

2nd Quarter
DAL Fritsch 36 FG, 0:15

4th Quarter
PIT Safety Harrison 0, 3:32
PIT Gerela 36 FG, 6:19
PIT Gerela 18 FG, 8:23
PIT Swann 64 pass from Bradshaw (kick failed), 11:58
DAL P. Howard 34 pass from Staubach (Fritsch kick), 13:12

SUPER BOWL XI
JANUARY 9, 1977

Oakland Raiders 32
Minnesota Vikings 14

Attendance: 103,438

MVP: Fred Biletnikoff (WR), Raiders
4 receptions, 79 yards

How They Got There: Oakland – d. New England, 24-21; d. Pittsburgh, 24-7 (AFC Championship). Minnesota – d. Washington, 35-20; d. L.A. Rams, 24-13 (NFC Championship).

In front of 81 million television viewers, the largest audience ever to watch a sporting event, the Raiders won their first Super Bowl title. Clarence Davis rushed for 137 yards, Fred Biletnikoff made four key receptions, and the defense came up big for the victors. Oakland built a 16-0 halftime lead – on Errol Mann's 24-yard field goal, a one-yard TD pass from Ken Stabler to Dave Casper, and Pete Banaszak's one-yard scoring run. After the Vikings cut the deficit to 19-7, a pair of fourth-quarter interceptions clinched the championship for the Raiders. One set up Banaszak's second touchdown run, while the other resulted in cornerback Willie Brown's 75-yard interception return for a score.

ROSE BOWL
Pasadena, Calif.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Oakland	0	16	3	13	32
Minnesota	0	0	7	7	14

2nd Quarter
OAK Mann 24 FG, 0:48
OAK Casper 1 pass from Stabler (Mann kick), 7:50
OAK Banaszak 1 run (kick failed),11:27

3rd Quarter
OAK Mann 40 FG, 9:44
MIN S. White 8 pass from Tarkenton (Cox kick), 14:13

4th Quarter
OAK Banaszak 2 run (Mann kick), 7:21
OAK Brown 75 interception return (kick failed), 9:17
MIN Voigt 13 pass from Lee (Cox kick), 14:35

SUPER BOWL XII
JANUARY 15, 1978

Dallas Cowboys 27
Denver Broncos 10

Attendance: 75,583

MVPs: Randy White (DT) and Harvey Martin (DE), Cowboys
Leaders of a defense that had four sacks and allowed just 156 total yards

How They Got There: Dallas – d. Chicago, 37-7; d. Minnesota, 23-6 (NFC Championship). Denver – d. Pittsburgh, 34-21; d. Oakland, 20-17 (AFC Championship).

Super Bowl TV viewership exceeded 100 million for the first time, and those fans saw Dallas turn two interceptions into 10 points and Efren Herrera add a 35-yard field goal for a 13-0 halftime lead. The Cowboys then tacked on two second-half TDs, the first on Butch Johnson's spectacular diving catch in the end zone and the other when running back Robert Newhouse tossed a 29-yard pass to Golden Richards. Dallas' defense forced eight turnovers in the win.

SUPERDOME
New Orleans, La.

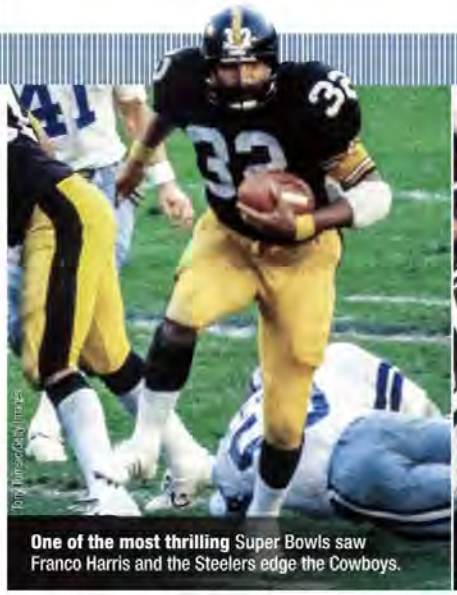
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Dallas	10	3	7	7	27
Denver	0	0	10	0	10

1st Quarter
DAL Dorsett 3 run (Herrera kick), 10:31
DAL Herrera 35 FG, 13:29

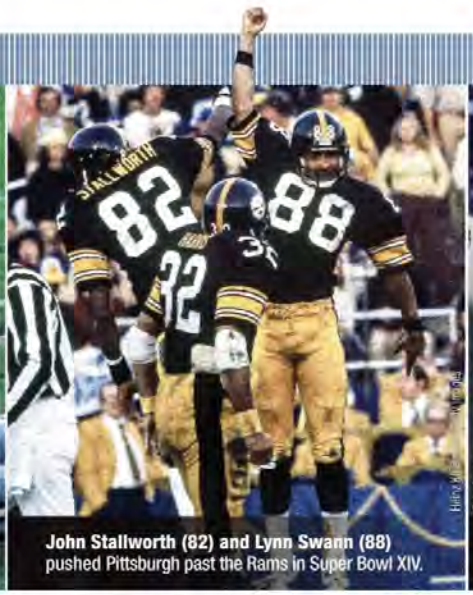
2nd Quarter
DAL Herrera 43 FG, 3:44

3rd Quarter
DEN Turner 47 FG, 2:28
DAL Johnson 45 pass from Staubach (Herrera kick), 8:01
DEN Lytle 1 run (Turner kick), 9:21

4th Quarter
DAL Richards 29 pass from Newhouse (Herrera kick), 7:56



One of the most thrilling Super Bowls saw Franco Harris and the Steelers edge the Cowboys.



John Stallworth (82) and Lynn Swann (88) pushed Pittsburgh past the Rams in Super Bowl XIV.

Gene Upshaw's message after Super Bowl XV was loud and clear: the Raiders were champions!

SUPER BOWL XIII
JANUARY 21, 1979

Pittsburgh Steelers	35
Dallas Cowboys	31

Attendance: 79,484

MVP: Terry Bradshaw (QB), Steelers
17 of 30 passing, 318 yards, 4 TDs

How They Got There: Pittsburgh – d. Denver, 33-10; d. Houston Oilers, 34-5 (AFC Championship). Dallas – d. Atlanta, 27-20; d. L.A. Rams, 28-0 (NFC Championship).

Terry Bradshaw's four touchdown passes led the Steelers, who became the first team to win three Super Bowls. The first two scoring tosses went to John Stallworth, and the third, with 26 seconds remaining in the second quarter, was to Rocky Bleier for a 21-14 halftime lead. The Steelers then broke things open with TDs 19 seconds apart midway through the final period – Franco Harris rambled 22 yards for a score, and after Dennis Winston recovered a fumble on the ensuing kickoff, Bradshaw fired an 18-yard strike to Lynn Swann.

ORANGE BOWL
Miami, Fla.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Pittsburgh	7	14	0	14	35
Dallas	7	7	3	14	31

1st Quarter
PIT Stallworth 28 pass from Bradshaw (Gerela kick), 5:13
DAL Hill 39 pass from Staubach (Septien kick), 15:00

2nd Quarter
DAL Hegman 37 fumble return (Septien kick), 2:52
PIT Stallworth 75 pass from Bradshaw (Gerela kick), 4:35
PIT Bleier 7 pass from Bradshaw (Gerela kick), 14:34

3rd Quarter
DAL Septien 27 FG, 12:24

4th Quarter
PIT Harris 22 run (Gerela kick), 7:50
PIT Swann 18 pass from Bradshaw (Gerela kick), 8:09
DAL DuPree 7 pass from Staubach (Septien kick), 12:33
DAL Johnson 4 pass from Staubach (Septien kick), 14:38

SUPER BOWL XIV
JANUARY 20, 1980

Pittsburgh Steelers	31
Los Angeles Rams	19

Attendance: 103,985

MVP: Terry Bradshaw (QB), Steelers
14 of 21 passing, 309 yards, 2 TDs

How They Got There: Pittsburgh – d. Miami, 34-14; d. Houston Oilers, 27-13 (AFC Championship). Los Angeles – d. Dallas, 21-19; d. Tampa Bay, 9-0 (NFC Championship).

Trailing 13-10 at halftime, the Steelers rallied to win their fourth Super Bowl crown in six years. They briefly moved ahead in the third quarter when Terry Bradshaw hit Lynn Swann on a 47-yard TD pass, but the Rams responded on their next possession with Lawrence McCutcheon throwing a halfback option touchdown to Ron Smith. The Steelers would finally go ahead to stay in the fourth quarter on Bradshaw's 73-yard touchdown throw to John Stallworth. After stopping an L.A. threat with a Jack Lambert interception, they sealed the verdict on Franco Harris' one-yard TD run.

ROSE BOWL
Pasadena, Calif.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Los Angeles Rams	7	6	6	0	19
Pittsburgh	3	7	7	14	31

1st Quarter
PIT Bahr 41 FG, 7:29
LA Bryant 1 run (Corral kick), 12:16

2nd Quarter
PIT Harris 1 run (Bahr kick), 2:08
LA Corral 31 FG, 7:39
LA Corral 45 FG, 14:46

3rd Quarter
PIT Swann 47 pass from Bradshaw (Bahr kick), 2:48
LA R. Smith 24 pass from McCutcheon (kick failed), 4:45

4th Quarter
PIT Stallworth 73 pass from Bradshaw (Bahr kick), 2:56
PIT Harris 1 run (Bahr kick), 13:11

SUPER BOWL XV
JANUARY 25, 1981

Oakland Raiders	27
Philadelphia Eagles	10

Attendance: 76,135

MVP: Jim Plunkett (QB), Raiders
13 of 21 passing, 261 yards, 3 TDs

How They Got There: Oakland – d. Houston Oilers, 27-7; d. Cleveland, 14-12; d. San Diego Chargers, 34-27 (AFC Championship). Philadelphia – d. Minnesota, 31-16; d. Dallas, 20-7 (NFC Championship).

Jim Plunkett passed for three touchdowns, including an 80-yard strike to Kenny King late in the first quarter, as the Raiders became the first wild card team to win the Super Bowl. Linebacker Rod Martin set up Oakland's first touchdown with an interception, one of a Super Bowl-record three he had in the game, while King's grab marked the longest play in Super Bowl history at the time. Oakland's Mark van Eeghen led all rushers with 75 yards, while teammate Cliff Branch had five receptions for 67 yards, including two catches that went for touchdowns.

SUPERDOME
New Orleans, La.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Oakland	14	0	10	3	27
Philadelphia	0	3	0	7	10

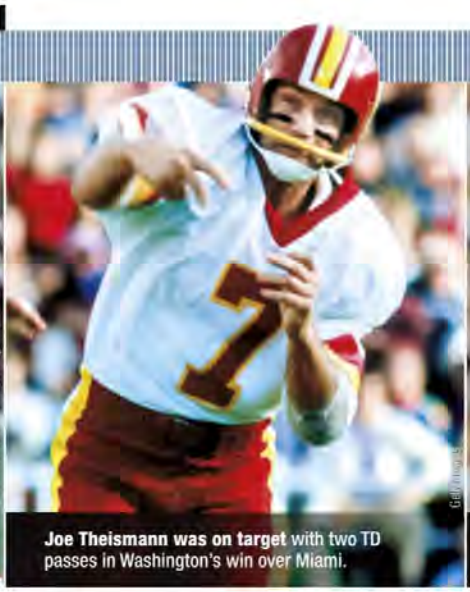
1st Quarter
OAK Branch 2 pass from Plunkett (Bahr kick), 6:04
OAK King 80 pass from Plunkett (Bahr kick), 14:51

2nd Quarter
PHI Franklin 30 FG, 4:32

3rd Quarter
OAK Branch 29 pass from Plunkett (Bahr kick), 2:36
OAK Bahr 46 FG, 10:25

4th Quarter
PHI Krepfle 8 pass from Jaworski (Franklin kick), 1:01
OAK Bahr 35 FG, 6:31

Ray Wersching's four field goals kept the Bengals at bay in the 49ers' Super Bowl XVI victory.



Joe Theismann was on target with two TD passes in Washington's win over Miami.

Jim Plunkett's steady hand delivered the Raiders their third Super Bowl title in eight years.

SUPER BOWL XVI
JANUARY 24, 1982

San Francisco 49ers 26
Cincinnati Bengals 21

Attendance: 81,270

MVP: Joe Montana (QB), 49ers
14 of 22 passing, 157 yards, 1 TD

How They Got There: San Francisco – d. N.Y. Giants, 38-24; d. Dallas, 28-27 (NFC Championship). Cincinnati – d. Buffalo, 28-21; d. San Diego Chargers, 27-7 (AFC Championship).

Ray Wersching's Super Bowl record-tying four field goals and Joe Montana's controlled passing lifted the 49ers to their first NFL championship. San Francisco owned a 20-0 halftime lead thanks to Montana's one-yard TD run, Earl Cooper's 11-yard scoring catch, and 22- and 26-yard field goals from Wersching. The Bengals closed the gap on Ken Anderson's five-yard run and Dan Ross' four-yard TD grab, but the 49ers' kicker padded the lead with two fourth-quarter field goals. Cincinnati outgained San Francisco, 356-275, making it the first time in Super Bowl history that the losing team had more total yards.

SILVERDOME
Pontiac, Mich.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
San Francisco	7	13	0	6	26
Cincinnati	0	0	7	14	21

1st Quarter
SF Montana 1 run (Wersching kick), 9:08

2nd Quarter
SF E. Cooper 11 pass from Montana (Wersching kick), 8:07
SF Wersching 22 FG, 14:45
SF Wersching 26 FG, 14:58

3rd Quarter
CIN Anderson 5 run (Breech kick), 3:35

4th Quarter
CIN Ross 4 pass from Anderson (Breech kick), 4:54
SF Wersching 40 FG, 9:35
SF Wersching 23 FG, 13:03
CIN Ross 3 pass from Anderson (Breech kick), 14:44

SUPER BOWL XVII
JANUARY 30, 1983

Washington Redskins 27
Miami Dolphins 17

Attendance: 103,667

MVP: John Riggins (RB), Redskins
38 carries, 166 yards, 1 TD

How They Got There: Washington – d. Detroit, 31-7; d. Minnesota, 21-7; d. Dallas, 31-17 (NFC Championship). Miami – d. New England, 28-13; d. San Diego Chargers, 34-13; d. N.Y. Jets, 14-0 (AFC Championship).

John Riggins topped 100 rushing yards for the fourth straight playoff game, part of a 276-yard ground effort for the Redskins, who won their first NFL title since 1942. The Dolphins held a 17-10 halftime lead, but wouldn't score again. Mark Moseley's short field goal pulled Washington within three, and Riggins moved his team ahead when he rambled 43 yards on a fourth-and-1 play early in the fourth quarter. Charlie Brown's six-yard TD catch with 1:55 left closed out the scoring. The Dolphins managed only 176 total yards of offense, and just 34 after intermission.

ROSE BOWL
Pasadena, Calif.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Miami	7	10	0	0	17
Washington	0	10	3	14	27

1st Quarter
MIA Cefalo 76 pass from Woodley (Von Schamann kick), 6:49

2nd Quarter
WAS Moseley 31 FG, 0:21
MIA Von Schamann 20 FG, 9:00
WAS Garrett 4 pass from Theismann (Moseley kick), 13:09
MIA Walker 98 kickoff return (Von Schamann kick), 13:22

3rd Quarter
WAS Moseley 20 FG, 6:51

4th Quarter
WAS Riggins 43 run (Moseley kick), 4:59
WAS Brown 6 pass from Theismann (Moseley kick), 13:05

SUPER BOWL XVIII
JANUARY 22, 1984

Los Angeles Raiders 38
Washington Redskins 9

Attendance: 72,920

MVP: Marcus Allen (RB), Raiders
20 carries, 191 yards, 2 TDs

How They Got There: Los Angeles – d. Pittsburgh, 38-10; d. Seattle, 30-14 (AFC Championship). Washington – d. L.A. Rams, 51-7; d. San Francisco, 24-21 (NFC Championship).

Derrick Jensen's end zone recovery of a punt he blocked – giving his team a 7-0 lead less than five minutes into the game – put the Raiders on course for a one-sided victory. Two key plays sealed Washington's fate. With just seven seconds left in the first half, Raiders linebacker Jack Squirek intercepted a pass at the Redskins 5-yard line that he ran in for a touchdown to give Los Angeles a 21-3 lead. Then, on the final play of the third quarter, game MVP Marcus Allen darted 74 yards for a backbreaking touchdown.

TAMPA STADIUM
Tampa, Fla.

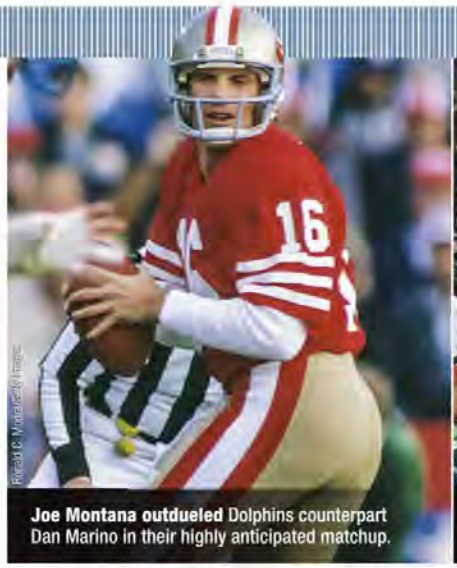
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Washington	0	3	6	0	9
Los Angeles Raiders	7	14	14	3	38

1st Quarter
LA Jensen 0 blocked punt return (Bahr kick), 4:52

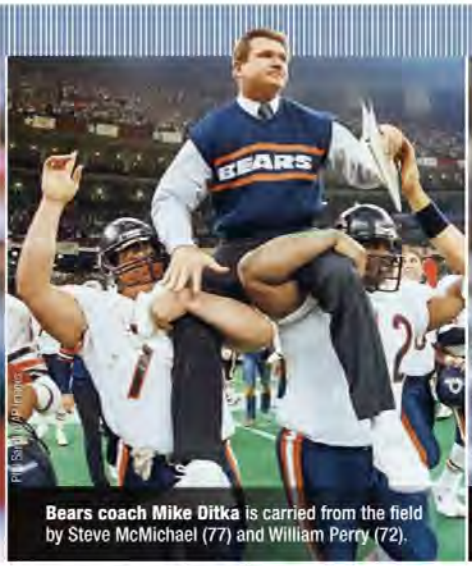
2nd Quarter
LA Branch 12 pass from Plunkett (Bahr kick), 5:46
WAS Moseley 24 FG, 11:55
LA Squirek 5 interception return (Bahr kick), 14:53

3rd Quarter
WAS Riggins 1 run (kick blocked), 4:08
LA Allen 5 run (Bahr kick), 7:54
LA Allen 74 run (Bahr kick), 15:00

4th Quarter
LA Bahr 21 FG, 12:36

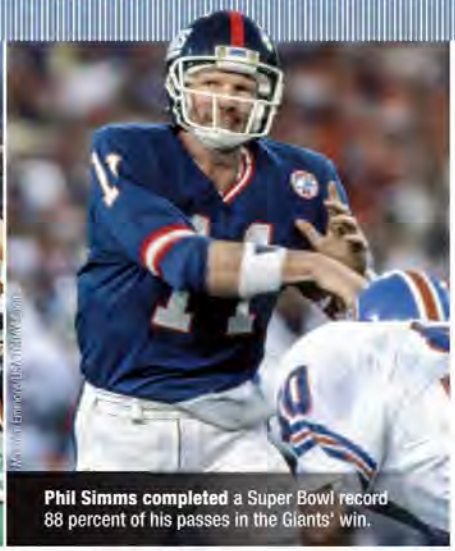

Ronald C. Modra/Getty Images

Joe Montana outdueled Dolphins counterpart Dan Marino in their highly anticipated matchup.



Phil Sandlin/AP Images

Bears coach Mike Ditka is carried from the field by Steve McMichael (77) and William Perry (72).


Manny Rubio/USA TODAY Sports

Phil Simms completed a Super Bowl record 88 percent of his passes in the Giants' win.

SUPER BOWL XIX
JANUARY 20, 1985

San Francisco 49ers	38
Miami Dolphins	16

Attendance: 84,059

MVP: Joe Montana (QB), 49ers
24 of 35 passing, 331 yards, 3 TDs

How They Got There: San Francisco – d. N.Y. Giants, 21-10; d. Chicago, 23-0 (NFC Championship). Miami – d. Seattle, 31-10; d. Pittsburgh, 45-28 (AFC Championship).

San Francisco piled up 537 net yards as Joe Montana got the best of Dan Marino in this battle of future Hall of Fame QBs. Roger Craig became the first player to score three TDs in a Super Bowl game, one of those on an eight-yard TD reception that gave the 49ers a lead they would never relinquish. He added a short touchdown run before halftime and would close out San Francisco's scoring with a 16-yard reception from Montana. Craig finished with 58 yards rushing and caught seven passes for another 77 yards. The 49ers also held a 37:11 to 22:49 time of possession advantage over the Dolphins.

STANFORD STADIUM
Stanford, Calif.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Miami10 6	0	0	16		
San Francisco	7	21	10	0	38

1st Quarter
MIA Von Schamann 37 FG, 7:36
SF Monroe 33 pass from Montana (Wersching kick), 11:48
MIA D. Johnson 2 pass from Marino (Von Schamann kick), 14:15

2nd Quarter
SF Craig 8 pass from Montana (Wersching kick), 3:26
SF Montana 6 run (Wersching kick), 8:02
SF Craig 2 run (Wersching kick), 12:55
MIA Von Schamann 31 FG, 14:48
MIA Von Schamann 30 FG, 15:00

3rd Quarter
SF Wersching 27 FG, 4:48
SF Craig 16 pass from Montana (Wersching kick), 8:42

SUPER BOWL XX
JANUARY 26, 1986

Chicago Bears	46
New England Patriots	10

Attendance: 73,818

MVP: Richard Dent (DE), Bears
1.5 sacks, defense allowed 7 rushing yards

How They Got There: Chicago – d. N.Y. Giants, 21-0; d. L.A. Rams, 24-0 (NFC Championship). New England – d. N.Y. Jets, 26-14; d. L.A. Raiders, 27-20; d. Miami, 31-14 (AFC Championship).

In a dominating display from start to finish, the Bears' league-leading defense recorded seven sacks and limited the Patriots to just seven rushing yards. Chicago yielded an early field goal, but then scored the game's next 44 points. QB Jim McMahon and Matt Suhey had scoring runs, and Kevin Butler kicked three field goals, to give the Bears a 23-3 halftime lead. After forcing a Patriots punt to start the second half, Chicago marched 96 yards for another TD to put the game out of reach. Bears RB Walter Payton rushed for 61 yards, while Richard Dent became just the fifth defender to be named Super Bowl MVP.

SUPERDOME
New Orleans, La.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Chicago	13	10	21	2	46
New England	3	0	0	7	10

1st Quarter
NE Franklin 36 FG, 1:19
CHI Butler 28 FG, 5:40
CHI Butler 24 FG, 13:34
CHI Suhey 11 run (Butler kick), 14:37

2nd Quarter
CHI McMahon 2 run (Butler kick), 7:36
CHI Butler 24 FG, 15:00

3rd Quarter
CHI McMahon 1 run (Butler kick), 7:38
CHI Phillips 28 interception return (Butler kick), 8:44
CHI Perry 1 run (Butler kick), 11:38

4th Quarter
NE Fryar 8 pass from Grogan (Franklin kick), 1:46
CHI Safety Waechter 0, 9:24

SUPER BOWL XXI
JANUARY 25, 1987

New York Giants	39
Denver Broncos	20

Attendance: 101,063

MVP: Phil Simms (QB), Giants
22 of 25 passing, 268 yards, 3 TDs

How They Got There: New York – d. San Francisco, 49-3; d. Washington, 17-0 (NFC Championship). Denver – d. New England, 22-17; d. Cleveland, 23-20 in OT (AFC Championship).

Buoyed by a big defensive stand in the second quarter, the Giants captured their first NFL title since 1956. The Broncos had a first down at the New York 1-yard line, but were stymied on three running plays and then missed a short field goal attempt. The Giants would take command in the third quarter en route to a 30-point second half, and moved in front for good on Mark Bavaro's 13-yard touchdown reception. Phil Simms deftly managed the game for the victors, setting a Super Bowl record by completing 88 precent of his passes.

ROSE BOWL
Pasadena, Calif.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Denver	10	0	0	10	20
New York Giants	7	2	17	13	39

1st Quarter
DEN Karlis 48 FG, 4:09
NYG Mowatt 6 pass from Simms (Allegre kick),9:33
DEN Elway 4 run (Karlis kick), 12:54

2nd Quarter
NYG Safety Martin 0, 12:14

3rd Quarter
NYG Bavaro 13 pass from Simms (Allegre kick), 4:52
NYG Allegre 21 FG, 11:06
NYG Morris 1 run (Allegre kick), 14:36

4th Quarter
NYG McConkey 6 pass from Simms (Allegre kick), 4:04
DEN Karlis 28 FG, 8:59
NYG Anderson 2 run (kick failed),11:42
DEN Johnson 47 pass from Elway (Karlis kick), 12:54

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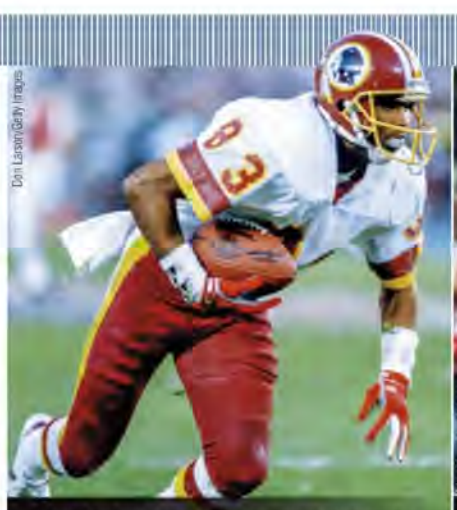

Tom Lasan/Getty Images

Ricky Sanders caught two long touchdown passes during the Redskins' second-quarter explosion.

Mike Powell/Allsport

The Super Bowl's most famous drive culminated with John Taylor's game-winning TD reception.

Focus on Sport/Getty Images

Jerry Rice and the 49ers capped yet another season by being crowned the best team in football.

SUPER BOWL XXII
JANUARY 31, 1988

Washington Redskins 42
Denver Broncos 10

Attendance: 73,302

MVP: Doug Williams (QB), Redskins
18 of 29 passing, 340 yards, 4 TDs

How They Got There: Washington – d. Chicago, 21-17; d. Minnesota, 17-10 (NFC Championship). Denver – d. Houston Oilers, 34-10; d. Cleveland, 38-33 (AFC Championship).

The Redskins enjoyed a record-setting second quarter en route to victory. Trailing 10-0, Washington scored touchdowns on five straight possessions – establishing an NFL postseason mark for most points (35) in a period. QB Doug Williams led the way by passing for four TDs, including 80- and 50-yard bombs to Ricky Sanders, and the five TDs required only 18 total plays and 5:47 in possession. Timmy Smith amassed a Super Bowl-record 204 rushing yards (a mark that still stands), Barry Wilburn had two of the Redskins' three interceptions, and Alvin Walton recorded two of the team's five sacks.

JACK MURPHY STADIUM
San Diego, Calif.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Washington	0	35	0	7	42
Denver	10	0	0	0	10

1st Quarter
DEN Nattiel 56 pass from Elway (Karlis kick), 1:57
DEN Karlis 24 FG, 5:51

2nd Quarter
WAS Sanders 80 pass from D. Williams (Haji-Sheikh kick), 0:53
WAS Clark 27 pass from D. Williams (Haji-Sheikh kick), 4:45
WAS Smith 58 run (Haji-Sheikh kick), 8:33
WAS Sanders 50 pass from D. Williams (Haji-Sheikh kick), 11:18
WAS Didier 8 pass from D. Williams (Haji-Sheikh kick), 13:56

4th Quarter
WAS Smith 4 run (Haji-Sheikh kick), 1:51

SUPER BOWL XXIII
JANUARY 22, 1989

San Francisco 49ers 20
Cincinnati Bengals 16

Attendance: 75,129

MVP: Jerry Rice (WR), 49ers
11 receptions, 215 yards, 1 TD

How They Got There: San Francisco – d. Minnesota, 34-9; d. Chicago, 28-3 (NFC Championship). Cincinnati – d. Seattle, 21-13; d. Buffalo, 21-10 (AFC Championship).

By scoring on one of the most famous and clutch drives in league history, the 49ers became the first NFC team to win three Super Bowls. Cincinnati had taken a 16-13 lead on Jim Breech's 40-yard field goal with 3:20 remaining, but Joe Montana calmly drove San Francisco 92 yards over 11 plays, culminated with his 10-yard touchdown pass to John Taylor with just 34 seconds remaining. It was Taylor's lone catch of the game. Montana completed 23 of 36 passes for 357 yards, helping San Francisco post a 453 to 229 advantage in total yards.

JOE ROBBIE STADIUM
Miami, Fla.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Cincinnati	0	3	10	3	16
San Francisco	3	0	3	14	20

1st Quarter
SF Cofer 41 FG, 11:46

2nd Quarter
CIN Breech 34 FG, 13:41

3rd Quarter
CIN Breech 43 FG, 9:15
SF Cofer 32 FG, 14:10
CIN Jennings 93 kickoff return (Breech kick), 14:26

4th Quarter
SF Rice 14 pass from Montana (Cofer kick), 0:57
CIN Breech 40 FG, 11:40
SF Taylor 10 pass from Montana (Cofer kick), 14:26

SUPER BOWL XXIV
JANUARY 28, 1990

San Francisco 49ers 55
Denver Broncos 10

Attendance: 72,919

MVP: Joe Montana (QB), 49ers
22 of 29 passing, 297 yards, 5 TDs

How They Got There: San Francisco – d. Minnesota, 41-13; d. L.A. Rams, 30-3 (NFC Championship). Denver – d. Pittsburgh, 24-23; d. Cleveland, 37-21 (AFC Championship).

The 49ers coasted to victory while setting a Super Bowl record for points that still stands. They scored touchdowns on four of their six first-half possessions to take a 27-3 lead at intermission, then cemented their advantage with interceptions by Michael Walter and Chet Brooks to end Denver's first two drives of the second half. Joe Montana was named Super Bowl MVP for a then-record third time, with his favorite target being Jerry Rice, who caught seven passes for 148 yards and three touchdowns. The 49ers' dominance extended to first downs (28 to 12), net yards (461 to 167), and time of possession (39:31 to 20:29).

SUPERDOME
New Orleans, La.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
San Francisco	13	14	14	14	55
Denver	3	0	7	0	10

1st Quarter
SF Rice 20 pass from Montana (Cofer kick), 4:54
DEN Treadwell 42 FG, 8:13
SF Jones 7 pass from Montana (kick failed), 14:57

2nd Quarter
SF Rathman 1 run (Cofer kick), 7:45
SF Rice 38 pass from Montana (Cofer kick), 14:26

3rd Quarter
SF Rice 28 pass from Montana (Cofer kick), 2:12
SF Taylor 35 pass from Montana (Cofer kick), 5:16
DEN Elway 3 run (Treadwell kick), 8:07

4th Quarter
SF Rathman 3 run (Cofer kick), 0:03
SF Craig 1 run (Cofer kick), 1:13

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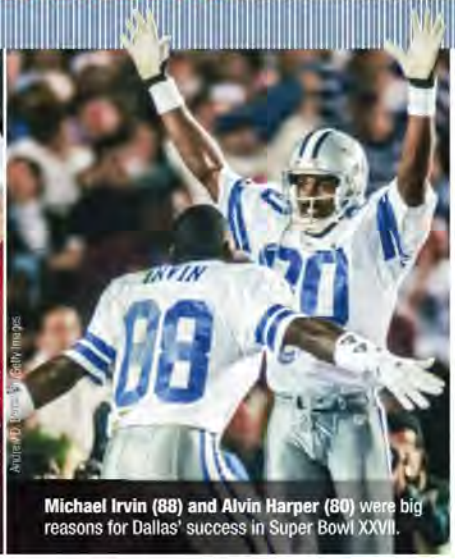
Jeff Hostetler had the Giants taking aim at one of the bigger upsets in Super Bowl history.

There was one constant to Washington's three Super Bowl championships: head coach Joe Gibbs.



Michael Irvin (88) and Alvin Harper (80) were big reasons for Dallas' success in Super Bowl XXVII.

SUPER BOWL XXV
JANUARY 27, 1991

New York Giants	20
Buffalo Bills	19

Attendance: 73,813

MVP: Ottis Anderson (RB), Giants
102 rushing yards, 1 TD; 5 receptions

How They Got There: New York – d. Chicago, 31-3; d. San Francisco, 15-13 (NFC Championship). Buffalo – d. Miami, 44-34; d. L.A. Raiders, 51-3 (AFC Championship).

Successfully employing a ball-control offense that saw them keep possession for more than 40 minutes, the Giants edged the high-powered Bills. Fourteen of New York's 73 plays came on its opening drive of the third quarter, which consumed a Super Bowl-record 9:29 and ended with Ottis Anderson's one-yard touchdown run. A Thurman Thomas TD jaunt put Buffalo back in front, but Matt Bahr gave New York the lead for good with his field goal midway through the fourth quarter. The Bills had a chance at victory in the final seconds, but Scott Norwood's 47-yard field goal attempt sailed wide right.

TAMPA STADIUM
Tampa, Fla.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Buffalo	3	9	0	7	19
New York Giants	3	7	7	3	20

1st Quarter
NYG Bahr 28 FG, 7:46
BUF Norwood 23 FG, 9:09

2nd Quarter
BUF D. Smith 1 run (Norwood kick), 2:30
BUF Safety B. Smith 0, 6:33
NYG Baker 14 pass from Hostetler (Bahr kick), 14:35

3rd Quarter
NYG Anderson 1 run (Bahr kick), 9:29

4th Quarter
BUF Thomas 31 run (Norwood kick), 0:08
NYG Bahr 21 FG, 7:40

SUPER BOWL XXVI
JANUARY 26, 1992

Washington Redskins	37
Buffalo Bills	24

Attendance: 63,130

MVP: Mark Rypien (QB), Redskins
18 of 33 passing, 292 yards, 2 TDs

How They Got There: Washington – d. Atlanta, 24-7; d. Detroit, 41-10 (NFC Championship). Buffalo – d. Kansas City, 37-14; d. Denver, 10-7 (AFC Championship).

After Buffalo had shaved 10 points off a 24-0 deficit, Mark Rypien restored order with his 30-yard TD pass to Gary Clark that propelled Washington to its third Super Bowl win in 10 years – all of them under coach Joe Gibbs but each with a different quarterback. The Redskins held a 17-0 halftime lead and quickly extended it on Gerald Riggs' short scoring run that was set up by a Kurt Gouveia interception. It was one of four pickoffs by the Redskins' defense. Clark finished with seven catches for 114 yards and Art Monk added seven for 113 yards for the victors, who amassed 417 yards of total offense.

METRODOME
Minneapolis, Minn.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Washington	0	17	14	6	37
Buffalo	0	0	10	14	24

2nd Quarter
WAS Lohmiller 34 FG, 1:58
WAS Byner 10 pass from Rypien (Lohmiller kick), 5:06
WAS Riggs 1 run (Lohmiller kick), 7:43

3rd Quarter
WAS Riggs 2 run (Lohmiller kick), 0:16
BUF Norwood 21 FG, 3:01
BUF Thomas 1 run (Norwood kick), 9:02
WAS Clark 30 pass from Rypien (Lohmiller kick), 13:36

4th Quarter
WAS Lohmiller 25 FG, 0:06
WAS Lohmiller 39 FG, 3:24
BUF Metzelaars 2 pass from Kelly (Norwood kick), 9:01
BUF Beebe 4 pass from Kelly (Norwood kick), 11:05

SUPER BOWL XXVII
JANUARY 31, 1993

Dallas Cowboys	52
Buffalo Bills	17

Attendance: 98,374

MVP: Troy Aikman (QB), Cowboys
22 of 30 passing, 273 yards, 4 TDs

How They Got There: Dallas – d. Philadelphia, 34-10; d. San Francisco, 30-20 (NFC Championship). Buffalo – d. Houston Oilers, 41-38 in OT; d. Pittsburgh, 24-3; d. Miami, 29-10 (AFC Championship).

Troy Aikman threw for four touchdowns, Emmitt Smith rushed for 108 yards, and the Cowboys converted nine turnovers into 35 points while coasting to victory. Two of those turnovers helped the Cowboys take the lead for good late in the opening quarter. First, Dallas safety James Washington intercepted a pass that he returned to the Bills 47, setting up Aikman's 23-yard TD throw to Jay Novacek. On the next play from scrimmage, a sack by the Cowboys' Charles Haley forced a fumble that teammate Jimmie Jones scooped up and ran two yards for another score.

ROSE BOWL
Pasadena, Calif.

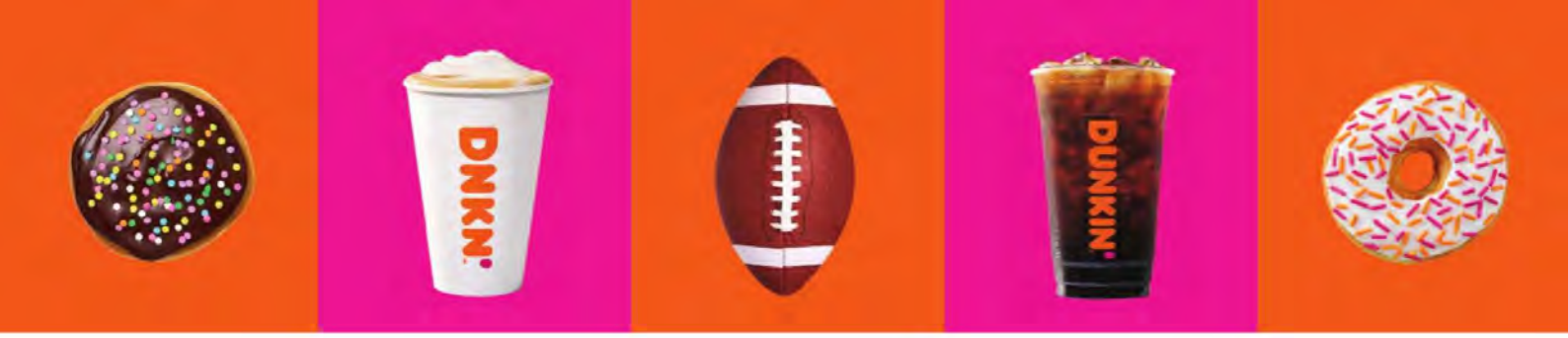
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Buffalo	7	3	7	0	17
Dallas	14	14	3	21	52

1st Quarter
BUF T. Thomas 2 run (Christie kick), 5:00
DAL Novacek 23 pass from Aikman (Elliott kick), 13:24
DAL J. Jones 2 fumble return (Elliott kick), 13:39

2nd Quarter
BUF Christie 21 FG, 11:36
DAL Irvin 19 pass from Aikman (Elliott kick), 13:06
DAL Irvin 18 pass from Aikman (Elliott kick), 13:24

3rd Quarter
DAL FG Elliott 20, 6:39
BUF Beebe 40 pass from Reich (Christie kick), 15:00

4th Quarter
DAL Harper 45 pass from Aikman (Elliott kick), 4:56
DAL E. Smith 10 run (Elliott kick), 6:48
DAL Norton 9 fumble return (Elliott kick), 7:29



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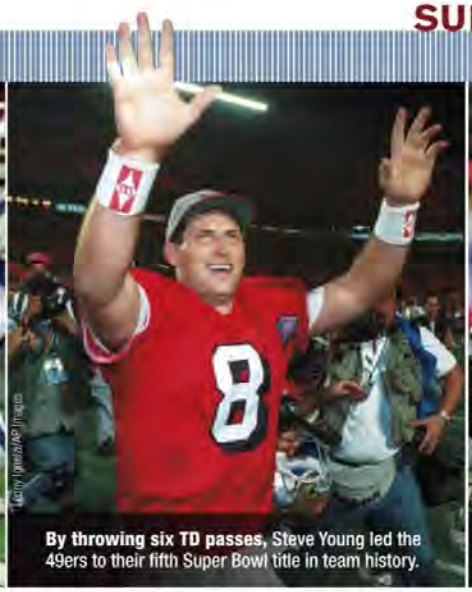
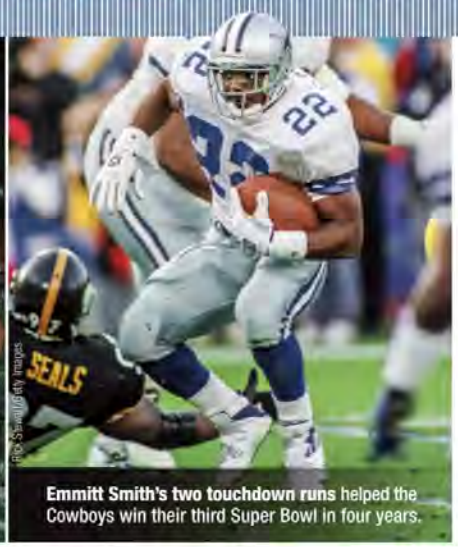
Troy Aikman brought the Cowboys to their second consecutive Super Bowl championship.



By throwing six TD passes, Steve Young led the 49ers to their fifth Super Bowl title in team history.



Emmitt Smith's two touchdown runs helped the Cowboys win their third Super Bowl in four years.

SUPER BOWL XXVIII
JANUARY 30, 1994

Dallas Cowboys 30
Buffalo Bills 13

Attendance: 72,817

MVP: Emmitt Smith (RB), Cowboys
30 carries, 132 yards, 2 TDs

How They Got There: Dallas – d. Green Bay, 27-17; d. San Francisco, 38-21 (NFC Championship). Buffalo – d. L.A. Raiders, 29-23; d. Kansas City, 30-13 (AFC Championship).

Dallas became the first team to begin the season 0-2 and go on to win the Super Bowl, and the fifth team to capture back-to-back Super Bowl titles. A big defensive play and Emmitt Smith's two TD runs helped the Cowboys erase a 13-6 halftime deficit. Just 55 seconds after intermission, safety James Washington recovered a fumble and weaved his way 46 yards for a touchdown to tie the game. After the Bills punted on their next possession, Smith took over, carrying seven times for 61 yards on a march that ended with his 15-yard scoring jaunt to put Dallas ahead for good. Washington added a fourth-quarter interception that led to another Smith touchdown run.

GEORGIA DOME
Atlanta, Ga.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Dallas	6	0	14	10	30
Buffalo	3	10	0	0	13

1st Quarter
DAL Murray 41 FG, 2:19
BUF Christie 54 FG, 4:41
DAL Murray 24 FG, 11:05

2nd Quarter
BUF Thomas 4 run (Christie kick), 2:34
BUF Christie 28 FG, 15:00

3rd Quarter
DAL Washington 46 fumble return (Murray kick), 0:55
DAL E. Smith 15 run (Murray kick), 6:18

4th Quarter
DAL E. Smith 1 run (Murray kick), 5:10
DAL Murray 20 FG, 12:10

SUPER BOWL XXIX
JANUARY 29, 1995

San Francisco 49ers 49
San Diego Chargers 26

Attendance: 74,107

MVP: Steve Young (QB), 49ers
24 of 36 passing, 325 yards, 6 TDs

How They Got There: San Francisco – d. Chicago, 44-15; d. Dallas, 38-28 (NFC Championship). San Diego – d. Miami, 22-21; d. Pittsburgh, 17-13 (AFC Championship).

Steve Young passed for a Super Bowl-record six TDs as the 49ers became the first team to win five Super Bowls. The QB, who directed an explosive offense that generated seven touchdowns, 28 first downs, and 455 total yards, wasted little time getting his team on the scoreboard. He fired a 44-yard touchdown throw to Jerry Rice only three plays and 1:24 into the game, and made it 14-0 with a 51-yard pass to Rickey Watters on the 49ers' next possession. Both Rice and Watters scored three times in the win, and the 75 combined points established another Super Bowl record that still stands.

JOE ROBBIE STADIUM
Miami, Fla.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
San Diego	7	3	8	8	26
San Francisco	14	14	14	7	49

1st Quarter
SF Rice 44 pass from S. Young (Brien kick), 1:24
SF Watters 51 pass from S. Young (Brien kick), 4:55
SD Means 1 run (Carney kick), 12:16

2nd Quarter
SF Floyd 5 pass from S. Young (Brien kick), 1:58
SF Watters 8 pass from S. Young (Brien kick), 10:16
SD Carney 31 FG, 13:16

3rd Quarter
SF Watters 9 run (Brien kick), 5:25
SF Rice 15 pass from S. Young (Brien kick), 11:42
SD Coleman 98 kickoff return (Seay pass from Humphries), 11:59

4th Quarter
SF Rice 7 pass from S. Young (Brien kick), 1:11
SD Martin 30 pass from Humphries (Pupunu pass from Humphries), 12:35

SUPER BOWL XXX
JANUARY 28, 1996

Dallas Cowboys 27
Pittsburgh Steelers 17

Attendance: 76,347

MVP: Larry Brown (CB), Cowboys
2 interceptions, both leading to Dallas TDs

How They Got There: Dallas – d. Philadelphia, 30-11; d. Green Bay, 38-27 (NFC Championship). Pittsburgh – d. Buffalo, 40-21; d. Indianapolis, 20-16 (AFC Championship).

Cornerback Larry Brown's two interceptions led to 14 second-half points, lifting the Cowboys to their third Super Bowl victory in four seasons and fifth title overall. Dallas scored on each of its first three possessions, taking a 13-0 lead behind Troy Aikman's three-yard TD pass to Jay Novacek and two Chris Boniol field goals. The Steelers managed to stay close, pulling within 13-7 and then 20-17, but Brown's heroics kept Dallas ahead. Both of his pickoffs set up short scoring runs by Emmitt Smith, the second with just 3:43 remaining in the game.

SUN DEVIL STADIUM
Tempe, Ariz.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Dallas	10	3	7	7	27
Pittsburgh	0	7	0	10	17

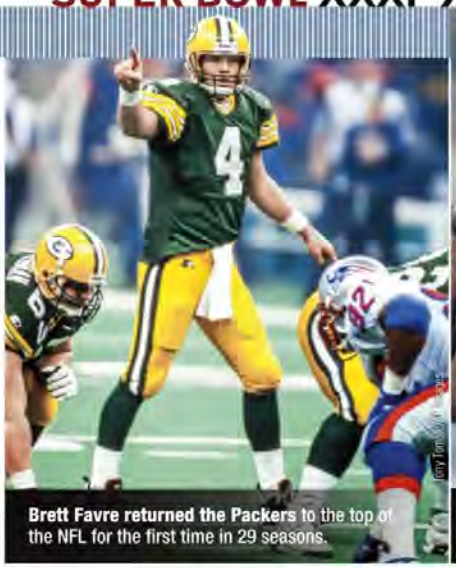
1st Quarter
DAL Boniol 42 FG, 2:55
DAL Novacek 3 pass from Aikman (Boniol kick), 9:37

2nd Quarter
DAL Boniol 35 FG, 8:57
PIT Thigpen 6 pass from O'Donnell (N. Johnson kick), 14:47

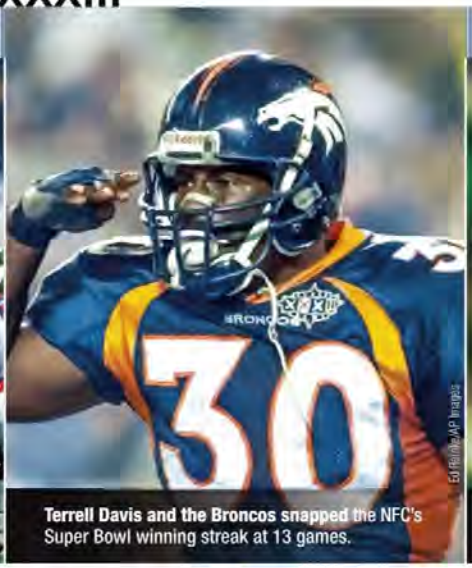
3rd Quarter
DAL E. Smith 1 run (Boniol kick), 8:18

4th Quarter
PIT N. Johnson 46 FG, 3:40
PIT Morris 1 run (N. Johnson kick), 8:24
DAL E. Smith 4 run (Boniol kick), 11:17

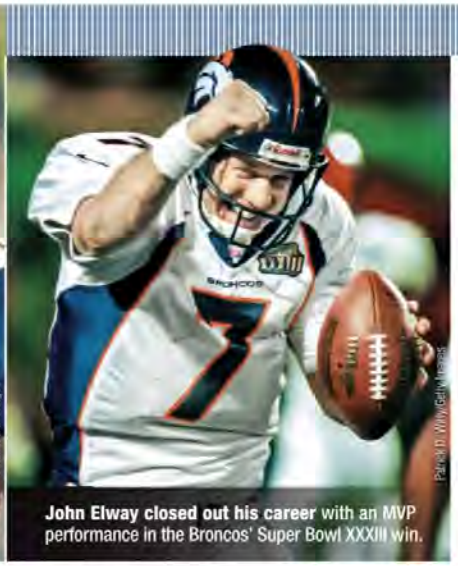
SUPER BOWL XXXI–XXXIII



Brett Favre returned the Packers to the top of the NFL for the first time in 29 seasons.



Terrell Davis and the Broncos snapped the NFC's Super Bowl winning streak at 13 games.



John Elway closed out his career with an MVP performance in the Broncos' Super Bowl XXXIII win.

SUPER BOWL XXXI
JANUARY 26, 1997

Green Bay Packers 35
New England Patriots 21

Attendance: 72,301

MVP: Desmond Howard (KR-PR), Packers
244 return yards, 99-yard kickoff return for TD

How They Got There: Green Bay – d. San Francisco, 35-14; d. Carolina, 30-13 (NFC Championship). New England – d. Pittsburgh, 28-3; d. Jacksonville, 20-6 (AFC Championship).

The NFC's Super Bowl win streak reached 13 games, thanks to big plays from Brett Favre and Desmond Howard that fueled the Packers. Favre threw for two touchdowns and ran for a third, while Howard's 99-yard kickoff-return TD in the third quarter stemmed New England's momentum. On Green Bay's second play from scrimmage, Favre hit Andre Rison for a 54-yard touchdown, and he later connected with Antonio Freeman on an 81-yarder. But it wasn't until Howard's return late in the third quarter that the Packers' lead was safe.

SUPERDOME
New Orleans, La.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
New England	14	0	7	0	21
Green Bay	10	17	8	0	35

1st Quarter
GB Rison 54 pass from Favre (Jacke kick), 3:32
GB Jacke 37 FG, 6:18
NE Byars 1 pass from Bledsoe (Vinatieri kick), 8:25
NE Coates 4 pass from Bledsoe (Vinatieri kick), 12:27

2nd Quarter
GB Freeman 81 pass from Favre (Jacke kick), 0:56
GB Jacke 31 FG, 6:45
GB Favre 2 run (Jacke kick), 13:49

3rd Quarter
NE Martin 18 run (Vinatieri kick), 11:33
GB Howard 99 kickoff return (Chmura pass from Favre), 11:50

SUPER BOWL XXXII
JANUARY 25, 1998

Denver Broncos 31
Green Bay Packers 24

Attendance: 68,912

MVP: Terrell Davis (RB), Broncos
30 carries, 157 yards, 3 TDs

How They Got There: Denver – d. Jacksonville, 42-17; d. Kansas City, 14-10; d. Pittsburgh, 24-21 (AFC Championship). Green Bay – d. Tampa Bay, 21-7; d. San Francisco, 23-10 (NFC Championship).

Terrell Davis rushed for 157 yards and a Super Bowl-record three touchdowns to lead the Broncos to their first NFL title and snap the NFC's streak of Super Bowl victories at 13. With the game knotted, 24-24, and just 3:27 left in regulation, the Broncos took over at the Packers 49. Davis rushed for two yards, and a 15-yard facemask penalty moved the ball to the Packers 32. Three plays later, Davis' 17-yard run brought the ball to the 1, and after a timeout, he waltzed into the end zone for the go-ahead score. Green Bay drove to the Broncos 31 in the waning seconds, but John Mobley knocked away a fourth-down pass to preserve the victory.

QUALCOMM STADIUM
San Diego, Calif.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Green Bay	7	7	3	7	24
Denver	7	10	7	7	31

1st Quarter
GB Freeman 22 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 4:02
DEN Davis 1 run (Elam kick), 9:21

2nd Quarter
DEN Elway 1 run (Elam kick), 0:05
DEN Elam 51 FG, 2:39
GB Chmura 6 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 14:48

3rd Quarter
GB Longwell 27 FG, 3:01
DEN Davis 1 run (Elam kick), 14:26

4th Quarter
GB Freeman 13 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 1:28
DEN Davis 1 run (Elam kick), 13:15

SUPER BOWL XXXIII
JANUARY 31, 1999

Denver Broncos 34
Atlanta Falcons 19

Attendance: 74,803

MVP: John Elway (QB), Broncos
18 of 29 passing, 336 yards, 1 TD

How They Got There: Denver – d. Miami, 38-3; d. N.Y. Jets, 23-10 (AFC Championship). Atlanta – d. San Francisco, 20-18; d. Minnesota, 30-27 in OT (NFC Championship).

Playing in his final game, John Elway shined while leading the Broncos to their second straight Super Bowl victory, the first AFC team to achieve that feat since the Steelers 19 years earlier. Denver took the lead early, with Elway's 41-yard pass to Rod Smith setting up Howard Griffith's short TD run. Elway then fired an 80-yard scoring strike to Smith to put the Broncos ahead, 17-3. In the second half, Darrien Gordon dashed Atlanta's comeback hopes with interceptions on consecutive possessions that led to Denver touchdowns, the second of those a three-yard Elway run making it 31-6.

PRO PLAYER STADIUM
Miami, Fla.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Denver	7	10	0	17	34
Atlanta	3	3	0	13	19

1st Quarter
ATL Andersen 32 FG, 5:25
DEN Griffith 1 run (Elam kick), 11:05

2nd Quarter
DEN Elam 26 FG, 5:43
DEN R. Smith 80 pass from Elway (Elam kick), 10:06
ATL Andersen 28 FG, 12:35

4th Quarter
DEN Griffith 1 run (Elam kick), 0:04
DEN Elway 3 run (Elam kick), 3:40
ATL Dwight 94 kickoff return (Andersen kick), 3:59
DEN Elam 37 FG, 7:52
ATL Mathis 3 pass from Chandler (pass failed), 12:56

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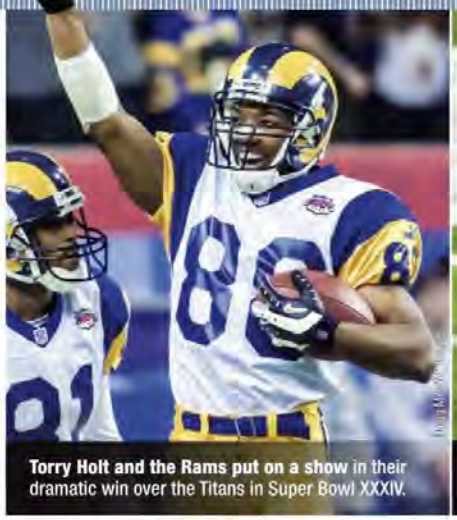
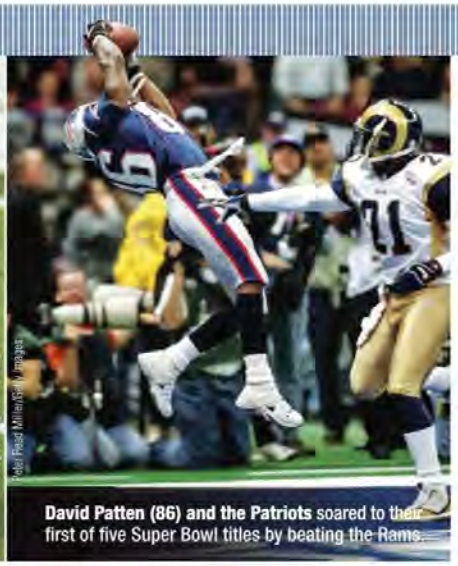


Torry Holt and the Rams put on a show in their dramatic win over the Titans in Super Bowl XXXIV.

Baltimore's victory made O.J. Brigance the first player to win NFL and CFL titles for the same city.



David Patten (86) and the Patriots soared to their first of five Super Bowl titles by beating the Rams.

SUPER BOWL XXXIV
JANUARY 30, 2000

St. Louis Rams 23
Tennessee Titans 16

Attendance: 72,625

MVP: Kurt Warner (QB), Rams
24 of 45 passing, 414 yards, 2 TDs

How They Got There: St. Louis – d. Minnesota, 49-37; d. Tampa Bay, 11-6 (NFC Championship). Tennessee – d. Buffalo, 22-16; d. Indianapolis, 19-16; d. Jacksonville, 33-14 (AFC Championship).

Mike Jones tackled Tennessee's Kevin Dyson at the 1-yard line as time expired, preserving the Rams' first Super Bowl title. For coach Dick Vermeil, the win came 19 years after he brought the Eagles to the Super Bowl, marking the longest stretch between Super Bowl appearances by a coach. St. Louis reached the red zone on each of its first six possessions, but managed just three field goals and one touchdown. The Titans then rallied with two long TD drives and an Al Del Greco field goal to tie the game late in the fourth quarter. It was quickly untied on the next play from scrimmage, when Kurt Warner fired a 73-yard touchdown pass to Isaac Bruce. Tennessee then drove deep into Rams territory, only to come up empty when Jones wrapped up Dyson shy of the goal line.

GEORGIA DOME
Atlanta, Ga.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
St. Louis	3	6	7	7	23
Tennessee	0	0	6	10	16

1st Quarter
STL Wilkins 27 FG, 12:00

2nd Quarter
STL Wilkins 29 FG, 10:44
STL Wilkins 28 FG, 14:45

3rd Quarter
STL Holt 9 pass from Warner (Wilkins kick), 7:40
TEN George 1 run (pass failed), 14:46

4th Quarter
TEN George 2 run (Del Greco kick), 7:39
TEN Del Greco 43 FG, 12:45
STL Bruce 73 pass from Warner (Wilkins kick), 13:06

SUPER BOWL XXXV
JANUARY 28, 2001

Baltimore Ravens 34
New York Giants 7

Attendance: 71,921

MVP: Ray Lewis (LB), Ravens
Star of a defense that allowed just 152 total yards

How They Got There: Baltimore – d. Denver, 21-3; d. Tennessee, 24-10; d. Oakland, 16-3 (AFC Championship). New York – d. Philadelphia, 20-10; d. Minnesota, 41-0 (NFC Championship).

The Ravens' defense led the way by permitting just 152 yards, forcing five turnovers, recording four sacks, and not allowing an offensive touchdown as the franchise posted its first Super Bowl victory. In a dizzying 36-second span of the third quarter, Baltimore's Duane Starks returned an interception 49 yards for a TD and a 17-0 Ravens lead. The Giants' Ron Dixon brought back the ensuing kickoff 97 yards for a score, but Jermaine Lewis matched it with a kickoff-return TD of his own. The Giants managed just one first down on their final four possessions.

RAYMOND JAMES STADIUM
Tampa, Fla.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Baltimore	7	3	14	10	34
New York Giants	0	0	7	0	7

1st Quarter
BAL Stokley 38 pass from Dilfer (Stover kick), 8:10

2nd Quarter
BAL Stover 47 FG, 13:19

3rd Quarter
BAL Starks 49 interception return (Stover kick), 11:11
NYG Dixon 97 kickoff return (Daluiso kick), 11:29
BAL Je. Lewis 84 kickoff return (Stover kick), 11:47

4th Quarter
BAL Ja. Lewis 3 run (Stover kick), 6:15
BAL Stover 34 FG, 9:33

SUPER BOWL XXXVI
FEBRUARY 3, 2002

New England Patriots 20
St. Louis Rams 17

Attendance: 72,922

MVP: Tom Brady (QB), Patriots
16 of 27 passing, 145 yards, 1 TD

How They Got There: New England – d. Oakland, 16-13 in OT; d. Pittsburgh, 24-17 (AFC Championship). St. Louis – d. Green Bay, 45-17; d. Philadelphia, 29-24 (NFC Championship).

Adam Vinatieri's 48-yard field goal proved the difference as the Patriots prevailed in the first Super Bowl where the winning points were scored on the final play. Underdog New England had built a 17-3 lead, but the Rams tied things up with two fourth-quarter touchdowns – the second with just 1:30 to go – before Patriots QB Tom Brady positioned his team for the game-winning kick. He completed five passes on the drive, three of those to J.R. Redmond and another a 23-yarder to Troy Brown that brought the ball into St. Louis territory.

SUPERDOME
New Orleans, La.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
St. Louis	3	0	0	14	17
New England	0	14	3	3	20

1st Quarter
STL FG Wilkins 50, 11:50

2nd Quarter
NE Law 47 interception return (Vinatieri kick), 6:11
NE Patten 8 pass from Brady (Vinatieri kick), 14:29

3rd Quarter
NE Vinatieri 37 FG, 13:42

4th Quarter
STL Warner 2 run (Wilkins kick), 5:29
STL Proehl 26 pass from Warner (Wilkins kick), 13:30
NE Vinatieri 48 FG, 15:00

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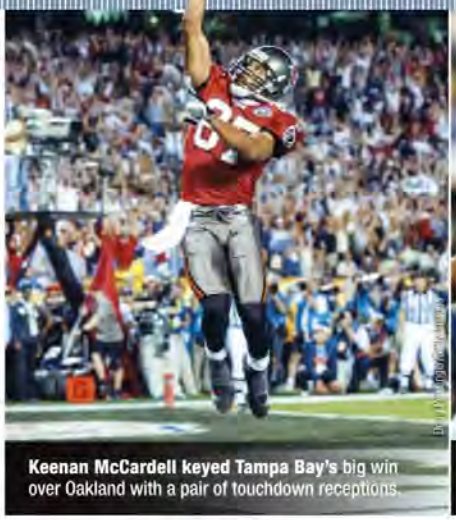
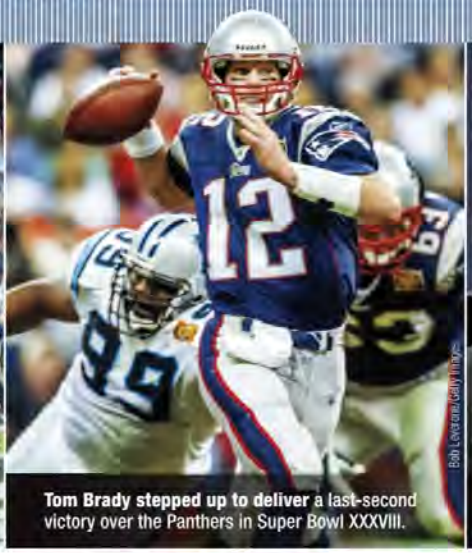
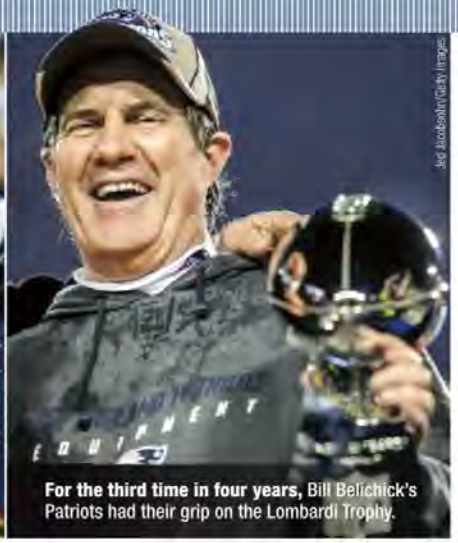


Keenan McCardell keyed Tampa Bay's big win over Oakland with a pair of touchdown receptions.



Tom Brady stepped up to deliver a last-second victory over the Panthers in Super Bowl XXXVIII.



For the third time in four years, Bill Belichick's Patriots had their grip on the Lombardi Trophy.

SUPER BOWL XXXVII
JANUARY 26, 2003

Tampa Bay Buccaneers 48
Oakland Raiders 21

Attendance: 67,603

MVP: Dexter Jackson (S), Buccaneers
2 interceptions

How They Got There: Tampa Bay – d. San Francisco, 31-6; d. Philadelphia, 27-10 (NFC Championship). Oakland – d. N.Y. Jets, 30-10; d. Tennessee, 41-24 (AFC Championship).

Tampa Bay intercepted five passes, three that it returned for TDs, on its way to the win. After an early field goal, Oakland managed just two first downs on its next nine possessions while the Buccaneers rolled to 34 straight points. Keenan McCardell ignited a decisive sequence, catching touchdown passes on back-to-back drives that put his team ahead, 27-3.

QUALCOMM STADIUM
San Diego, Calif.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Oakland	3	0	6	12	21
Tampa Bay	3	17	14	14	48

1st Quarter
OAK Janikowski 40 FG, 4:20
TB Gramatica 31 FG, 7:09

2nd Quarter
TB Gramatica 43 FG, 3:44
TB Alstott 2 run (Gramatica kick), 8:36
TB McCardell 5 pass from B. Johnson (Gramatica kick), 14:30

3rd Quarter
TB McCardell 8 pass from B. Johnson (Gramatica kick), 9:30
TB D. Smith 44 interception return (Gramatica kick), 10:13
OAK Porter 39 pass from Gannon (pass failed), 12:46

4th Quarter
OAK E. Johnson 13 return of blocked punt (pass failed), 0:46
OAK J. Rice 48 pass from Gannon (pass failed), 8:54
TB Brooks 44 interception return (Gramatica kick), 13:42
TB D. Smith 50 interception return (Gramatica kick), 14:58

SUPER BOWL XXXVIII
FEBRUARY 1, 2004

New England Patriots 32
Carolina Panthers 29

Attendance: 71,525

MVP: Tom Brady (QB), Patriots
32 of 48 passing, 354 yards, 3 TDs

How They Got There: New England – d. Tennessee, 17-14; d. Indianapolis, 24-14 (AFC Championship). Carolina – d. Dallas, 29-10; d. St. Louis, 29-23 in 2 OTs; d. Philadelphia, 14-3 (NFC Championship).

Adam Vinatieri's 41-yard field goal with four seconds to play lifted New England to its second championship in three years. While it took a Super Bowl-record 26 minutes, 55 seconds for the first points to be scored, the teams eventually combined for 868 total yards (481 by the Patriots). Carolina briefly moved in front on an 85-yard Muhsin Muhammad TD reception and later tied the game on Ricky Proehl's 12-yard scoring catch with 1:08 to play. But Tom Brady calmly drove the Patriots into field goal range, aided by Deion Branch's clutch 17-yard grab.

RELIANT STADIUM
Houston, Texas

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Carolina	0	10	0	19	29
New England	0	14	0	18	32

2nd Quarter
NE Branch 5 pass from Brady (Vinatieri kick), 11:55
CAR S. Smith 39 pass from Delhomme (Kasay kick), 13:53
NE Givens 5 pass from Brady (Vinatieri kick), 14:42
CAR Kasay 50 FG, 15:00

4th Quarter
NE A. Smith 2 run (Vinatieri kick), 0:11
CAR Foster 33 run (pass failed), 2:21
CAR Muhammad 85 pass from Delhomme (pass failed), 8:07
NE Vrabel 1 pass from Brady (Faulk run), 12:09
CAR Proehl 12 pass from Delhomme (Kasay kick), 13:52
NE Vinatieri 41 FG, 14:56

SUPER BOWL XXXIX
FEBRUARY 6, 2005

New England Patriots 24
Philadelphia Eagles 21

Attendance: 78,125

MVP: Deion Branch (WR), Patriots
11 receptions, 133 yards

How They Got There: New England – d. Indianapolis, 20-3; d. Pittsburgh, 41-27 (AFC Championship). Philadelphia – d. Minnesota, 27-14; d. Atlanta, 27-10 (NFC Championship).

Behind a defense that forced four turnovers – including two fourth-quarter interceptions – the Patriots joined the Cowboys as the only teams to win three Super Bowls in a span of four seasons. New England took the lead for good early in the fourth quarter on a drive sparked by Kevin Faulk, who caught screen passes of 13 and 14 yards and added a 12-yard run. Corey Dillon capped the possession with his two-yard TD run, and after Adam Vinatieri's 22-yard field goal made it 24-14, Tedy Bruschi and Rodney Harrison stepped up with interceptions that preserved the outcome.

ALLTEL STADIUM
Jacksonville, Fla.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
New England	0	7	7	10	24
Philadelphia	0	7	7	7	21

2nd Quarter
PHI Smith 6 pass from McNabb (Akers kick) 5:05
NE Givens 4 pass from Brady (Vinatieri kick), 13:50

3rd Quarter
NE Vrabel 2 pass from Brady (Vinatieri kick), 3:56
PHI Westbrook 10 pass from McNabb (Akers kick), 11:25

4th Quarter
NE Dillon 2 run (Vinatieri kick), 1:16
NE Vinatieri 22 FG, 6:20
PHI G. Lewis 30 pass from McNabb (Akers kick), 13:12

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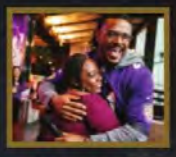
ARIZONA CARDINALS

GRADY JARRETT
ATLANTA FALCONS



BRANDON CARR
BALTIMORE RAVENS

LORENZO ALEXANDER
BUFFALO BILLS

JULIUS PEPPERS
CAROLINA PANTHERS

TREY BURTON
CHICAGO BEARS

CARLOS DUNLAP
CINCINNATI BENGALS

CHRISTIAN KIRKSEY
CLEVELAND BROWNS

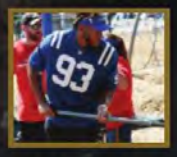
DAK PRESCOTT
DALLAS COWBOYS

VON MILLER
DENVER BRONCOS

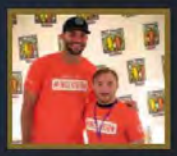
MATTHEW STAFFORD
DETROIT LIONS

KENNY CLARK
GREEN BAY PACKERS

WHITNEY MERCILUS
HOUSTON TEXANS



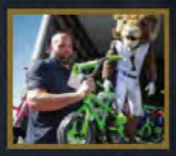
JABAAL SHEARD
INDIANAPOLIS COLTS



BLAKE BORTLES
JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS

DUSTIN COLQUITT
KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

COREY LIUGET
LOS ANGELES CHARGERS



ANDREW WHITWORTH
LOS ANGELES RAMS

KENNY STILLS
MIAMI DOLPHINS

KYLE RUDOLPH
MINNESOTA VIKINGS

DEVIN MCCOURTY
NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

MARK INGRAM
NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

MICHAEL THOMAS
NEW YORK GIANTS

KELVIN BEACHUM
NEW YORK JETS

MARSHAWN LYNCH
OAKLAND RAIDERS

CHRIS LONG
PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

CAMERON HEYWARD
PITTSBURGH STEELERS

ROBBIE GOULD
SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

K.J. WRIGHT
SEATTLE SEAHAWKS

GERALD MCCOY
TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS

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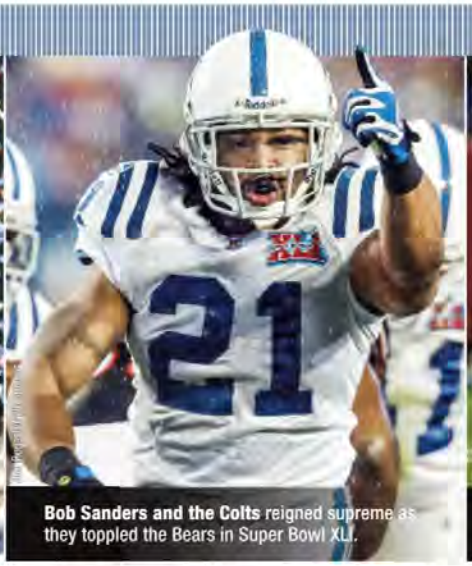
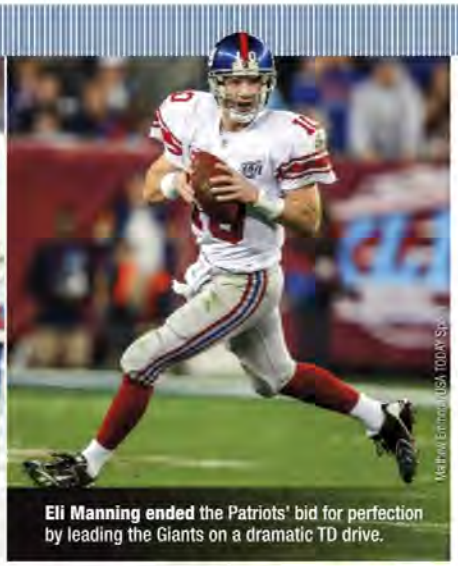
Hines Ward made the Super Bowl's 40th edition a Steel City celebration as Pittsburgh won its fifth title.



Bob Sanders and the Colts reigned supreme as they toppled the Bears in Super Bowl XLI.



Eli Manning ended the Patriots' bid for perfection by leading the Giants on a dramatic TD drive.

SUPER BOWL XL
FEBRUARY 5, 2006

Pittsburgh Steelers 21
Seattle Seahawks 10

Attendance: 68,206

MVP: Hines Ward (WR), Steelers
5 receptions, 123 yards, 1 TD

How They Got There: Pittsburgh – d. Cincinnati, 31-17; d. Indianapolis, 21-18; d. Denver, 34-17 (AFC Championship). Seattle – d. Washington, 20-10; d. Carolina, 34-14 (NFC Championship).

The Steelers finally earned their "one for the thumb," becoming the first AFC team to win five Super Bowls. Holding a tenuous 14-10 fourth-quarter lead, the game's key sequence came when cornerback Ike Taylor picked off a pass to stop a Seahawks threat. Pittsburgh quickly cashed in when Antwaan Randle El, a quarterback in college, took a handoff, sprinted right, then stopped and fired a 43-yard strike to Hines Ward for the first Super Bowl TD pass thrown by a wide receiver. In the third quarter, the Steelers' Willie Parker burst free for a Super Bowl-record 75-yard touchdown run.

FORD FIELD
Detroit, Mich.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Seattle	3	0	7	0	10
Pittsburgh	0	7	7	7	21

1st Quarter
SEA Brown 47 FG, 14:38

2nd Quarter
PIT Roethlisberger 1 run (Reed kick), 13:05

3rd Quarter
PIT Parker 75 run (Reed kick), 0:22
SEA Stevens 16 pass from Hasselbeck (Brown kick), 8:15

4th Quarter
PIT Ward 43 pass from Randle El (Reed kick), 6:04

SUPER BOWL XLI
FEBRUARY 4, 2007

Indianapolis Colts 29
Chicago Bears 17

Attendance: 74,512

MVP: Peyton Manning (QB), Colts
25 of 38 passing, 247 yards, 1 TD

How They Got There: Indianapolis – d. Kansas City, 23-8; d. Baltimore, 15-6; d. New England, 38-34 (AFC Championship). Chicago – d. Seattle, 27-24 in OT; d. New Orleans, 39-14 (NFC Championship).

A wet and wild night of Super Bowl firsts brought Tony Dungy, Peyton Manning, and the Colts to the top of the NFL. Dungy became the first African-American head coach to win the Super Bowl while directing the franchise to its first crown since relocating to Indianapolis in 1984. It was also the first Super Bowl title for Manning, whose career saw him set league marks for completions, passing yards, and passing TDs. The game also marked the first time the opening kickoff was run back for a touchdown, accomplished when the Bears' Devin Hester sped 92 yards to give his team the early lead.

DOLPHIN STADIUM
Miami, Fla.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Indianapolis	6	10	6	7	29
Chicago	14	0	3	0	17

1st Quarter
CHI Hester 92 kickoff return (Gould kick), 0:14
IND Wayne 53 pass from Manning (kick failed), 8:10
CHI Muhammad 4 pass from Grossman (Gould kick), 10:26

2nd Quarter
IND Vinatieri 29 FG, 3:43
IND Rhodes 1 run (Vinatieri kick), 8:51

3rd Quarter
IND Vinatieri 24 FG, 7:34
IND Vinatieri 20 FG, 11:44
CHI Gould 44 FG, 13:46

4th Quarter
IND Hayden 56 interception return (Vinatieri kick), 3:16

SUPER BOWL XLII
FEBRUARY 3, 2008

New York Giants 17
New England Patriots 14

Attendance: 71,101

MVP: Eli Manning (QB), Giants
19 of 34 passing, 255 yards, 2 TDs

How They Got There: New York – d. Tampa Bay, 24-14; d. Dallas, 21-17; d. Green Bay, 23-20 in OT (NFC Championship). New England – d. Jacksonville, 31-20; d. San Diego Chargers, 21-12 (AFC Championship).

The Giants became the first NFC wild card team to win the Super Bowl, an achievement made possible by a relentless defense and David Tyree's brilliant 32-yard catch that set up the go-ahead touchdown. Plaxico Burress capped the winning drive with his 13-yard TD grab with 35 seconds to play, shocking a Patriots squad that entered the game 18-0 and had taken the lead just minutes earlier on Randy Moss' six-yard touchdown reception. Michael Strahan (3 tackles, 1 sack, 1 pass defensed), playing his final game, keyed a defense that produced five sacks, while the Giants' ball-control approach on offense included an opening drive that lasted a Super Bowl-record 9 minutes, 59 seconds.

UNIVERSITY OF PHOENIX STADIUM
Glendale, Ariz.

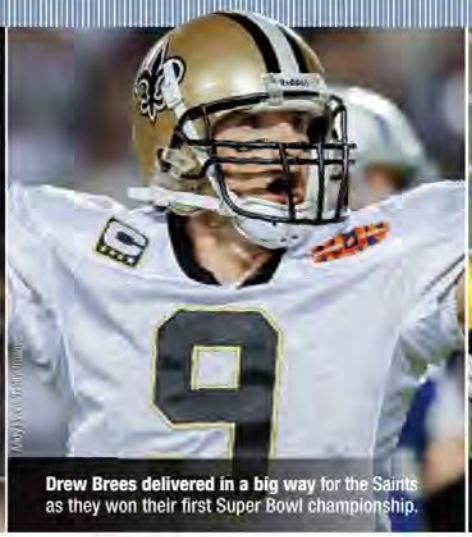
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
New York Giants	3	0	0	14	17
New England	0	7	0	7	14

1st Quarter
NYG Tynes 32 FG, 9:59

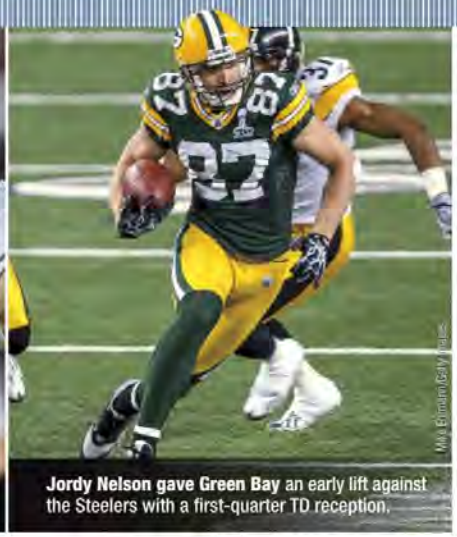
2nd Quarter
NE Maroney 1 run (Gostkowski kick), 0:03

4th Quarter
NYG Tyree 5 pass from Manning (Tynes kick), 3:55
NE Moss 6 pass from Brady (Gostkowski kick), 12:18
NYG Burress 13 pass from Manning (Tynes kick), 14:25

Santonio Holmes starred in the Steelers' latest Super Bowl win, catching the game-deciding TD.



Drew Brees delivered in a big way for the Saints as they won their first Super Bowl championship.



Jordy Nelson gave Green Bay an early lift against the Steelers with a first-quarter TD reception.

SUPER BOWL XLIII
FEBRUARY 1, 2009

Pittsburgh Steelers 27
Arizona Cardinals 23

Attendance: 70,774

MVP: Santonio Holmes (WR), Steelers
9 receptions, 131 yards, 1 TD

How They Got There: Pittsburgh – d. San Diego Chargers, 35-24; d. Baltimore, 23-14 (AFC Championship). Arizona – d. Atlanta, 30-24; d. Carolina, 33-13; d. Philadelphia, 32-25 (NFC Championship).

In a game with a long list of clutch plays, the Steelers saved the biggest for last. Arizona nearly pulled off what would have been an historic comeback, scoring 16 points in a frenzied fourth quarter and taking the lead on Larry Fitzgerald's 64-yard touchdown catch with 2:37 to play. Pittsburgh answered with a 78-yard drive, winning the game on Ben Roethlisberger's six-yard scoring pass to Santonio Holmes. The game also saw the Steelers' James Harrison return an interception 100 yards for a TD on the final play before halftime.

RAYMOND JAMES STADIUM
Tampa, Fla.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Pittsburgh	3	14	3	7	27
Arizona	0	7	0	16	23

1st Quarter
PIT Reed 18 FG, 5:15

2nd Quarter
PIT Russell 1 run (Reed kick), 0:59
ARI Patrick 1 pass from Warner (Rackers kick), 6:26
PIT Harrison 100 interception return (Reed kick), 15:00

3rd Quarter
PIT Reed 21 FG, 12:49

4th Quarter
ARI Fitzgerald 1 pass from Warner (Rackers kick), 7:27
ARI Safety, Holding penalty enforced in the end zone, 12:02
ARI Fitzgerald 64 pass from Warner (Rackers kick), 12:23
PIT Holmes 6 pass from Roethlisberger (Reed kick), 14:25

SUPER BOWL XLIV
FEBRUARY 7, 2010

New Orleans Saints 31
Indianapolis Colts 17

Attendance: 74,059

MVP: Drew Brees (QB), Saints
32 of 39 passing, 288 yards, 2 TDs

How They Got There: New Orleans – d. Arizona, 45-14; d. Minnesota, 31-28 in OT (NFC Championship). Indianapolis – d. Baltimore, 20-3; d. N.Y. Jets, 30-17 (AFC Championship).

Proving it's how you finish that's important, the Saints became the first team to take a three-game losing streak into the playoffs and then win the Super Bowl. They did it with a daring play call to start the second half – an onside kick that was recovered by Jonathan Casillas and set up a six-play drive that Drew Brees finished with a 16-yard TD pass to Pierre Thomas. Jeremy Shockey's fourth-quarter scoring grab moved New Orleans in front to stay, and Tracy Porter put the game away with his 74-yard interception-return touchdown with 3:12 remaining.

SUN LIFE STADIUM
Miami, Fla.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
New Orleans	0	6	10	15	31
Indianapolis	10	0	7	0	17

1st Quarter
IND Stover 38 FG, 7:31
IND Garcon 19 pass from Manning (Stover kick), 14:24

2nd Quarter
NO Hartley 46 FG, 5:26
NO Hartley 44 FG, 15:00

3rd Quarter
NO Thomas 19 pass from Brees (Hartley kick), 3:19
IND Addai 4 run (Stover kick), 8:45
NO FG Hartley 47, 12:59

4th Quarter
NO Shockey 2 pass from Brees (Moore pass from Brees), 9:18
NO Porter 74 interception return (Hartley kick), 11:48

SUPER BOWL XLV
FEBRUARY 6, 2011

Green Bay Packers 31
Pittsburgh Steelers 25

Attendance: 91,060

MVP: Aaron Rodgers (QB), Packers
24 of 39 passing, 304 yards, 3 TDs

How They Got There: Green Bay – d. Philadelphia, 21-16; d. Atlanta, 48-21; d. Chicago, 21-14 (NFC Championship). Pittsburgh – d. Baltimore, 31-24; d. N.Y. Jets, 24-19 (AFC Championship).

Aaron Rodgers threw three TD passes and Nick Collins returned an interception for another score, sparking the Packers to their fourth Super Bowl title. The Steelers had trailed, 21-3, but tallied two TDs to get close and were on the move again early in the fourth quarter. That's when Green Bay linebacker Clay Matthews stripped the ball from running back Rashard Mendenhall at the Packers 33 and teammate Desmond Bishop recovered. Rodgers then marched Green Bay to a quick touchdown that extended his team's lead to 28-17.

COWBOYS STADIUM
Arlington, Texas

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Pittsburgh	0	10	7	8	25
Green Bay	14	7	0	10	31

1st Quarter
GB Nelson 29 pass from Rodgers (Crosby kick), 11:16
GB Collins 37 interception return (Crosby kick), 11:40

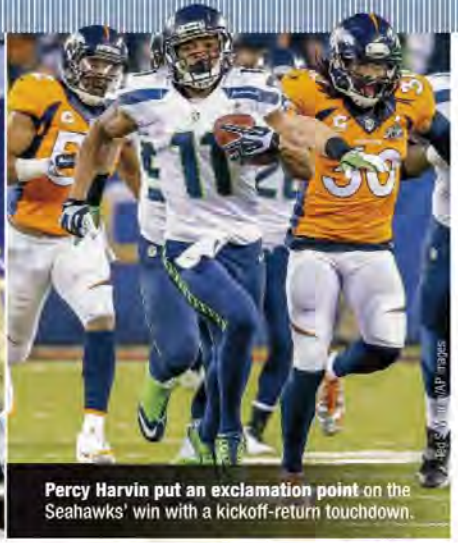
2nd Quarter
PIT Suisham 33 FG, 3:52
GB Jennings 21 pass from Rodgers (Crosby kick), 12:36
PIT Ward 8 pass from Roethlisberger (Suisham kick), 14:21

3rd Quarter
PIT Mendenhall 8 run (Suisham kick), 4:41

4th Quarter
GB Jennings 8 pass from Rodgers (Crosby kick), 3:03
PIT Wallace 25 pass from Roethlisberger (Randle El run), 7:26
GB Crosby 23 FG, 12:53

Victor Cruz kept the Giants on the move as they topped the Patriots for the second time in five years.

Ray Lewis retired a champion after igniting the Ravens' run to Super Bowl XLVII.



Percy Harvin put an exclamation point on the Seahawks' win with a kickoff-return touchdown.

SUPER BOWL XLVI
FEBRUARY 5, 2012

New York Giants 21
New England Patriots 17

Attendance: 68,658

MVP: Eli Manning (QB), Giants
30 of 40 passing, 296 yards, 1 TD

How They Got There: New York – d. Atlanta, 24-2; d. Green Bay, 37-20; d. San Francisco, 20-17 in OT (NFC Championship). New England – d. Denver, 45-10; d. Baltimore, 23-20 (AFC Championship).

In the first Super Bowl to feature two starting quarterbacks who previously won the big game's MVP award, Eli Manning and the Giants edged Tom Brady and the Patriots, scoring a late TD for the victory. Manning set a record by opening a Super Bowl with nine consecutive completions; Brady later put together a run of 16 completions in a row, breaking another Super Bowl mark. But with time counting down, Manning directed a nine-play, 88-yard drive that moved New York ahead to stay, capped when Ahmad Bradshaw ran for the winning touchdown with just under a minute to play.

LUCAS OIL STADIUM
Indianapolis, Ind.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
New York Giants	9	0	6	6	21
New England	0	10	7	0	17

1st Quarter
NYG Safety, Intentional grounding penalty enforced in end zone, 6:08
NYG Cruz 2 pass from Manning (Tynes kick), 11:36

2nd Quarter
NE Gostkowski 29 FG, 1:12
NE Woodhead 4 pass from Brady (Gostkowski kick), 14:52

3rd Quarter
NE Hernandez 12 pass from Brady (Gostkowski kick), 3:40
NYG Tynes 38 FG, 8:17
NYG Tynes 33 FG, 14:25

4th Quarter
NYG Bradshaw 6 run (run failed), 14:03

SUPER BOWL XLVII
FEBRUARY 3, 2013

Baltimore Ravens 34
San Francisco 49ers 31

Attendance: 71,024

MVP: Joe Flacco (QB), Ravens
22 of 33 passing, 287 yards, 3 TDs

How They Got There: Baltimore – d. Indianapolis, 24-9; d. Denver, 38-35 in 2 OTs; d. New England, 28-13 (AFC Championship). San Francisco – d. Green Bay, 45-31; d. Atlanta, 28-24 (NFC Championship).

The Ravens built a big lead, then held on to hand the 49ers their first Super Bowl loss in six appearances. Joe Flacco threw three first-half touchdowns – capping a spectacular 11-TD, zero-interception postseason – and Jacoby Jones opened the second half with a Super Bowl-record 108-yard kickoff-return touchdown that put Baltimore ahead, 28-6. The 49ers rallied late, but were stopped on downs at the Ravens 5-yard line with under two minutes to play.

MERCEDES-BENZ SUPERDOME
New Orleans, La.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Baltimore	7	14	7	6	34
San Francisco	3	3	17	8	31

1st Quarter
BAL Boldin 13 pass from Flacco (Tucker kick), 4:24
SF Akers 36 FG, 11:02

2nd Quarter
BAL Pitta 1 pass from Flacco (Tucker kick), 7:50
BAL Jones 56 pass from Flacco (Tucker kick), 13:15
SF Akers 27 FG, 15:00

3rd Quarter
BAL Jones 108 kickoff return (Tucker kick), 0:11
SF Crabtree 31 pass from Kaepernick (Akers kick), 7:40
SF Gore 6 run (Akers kick), 10:01
SF Akers 34 FG, 11:50

4th Quarter
BAL Tucker 19 FG, 2:06
SF Kaepernick 15 run (pass failed), 5:03
BAL Tucker 38 FG, 10:41
SF Safety, Koch forced out of end zone, 14:56

SUPER BOWL XLVIII
FEBRUARY 2, 2014

Seattle Seahawks 43
Denver Broncos 8

Attendance: 82,529

MVP: Malcolm Smith (LB), Seahawks
9 tackles, 69-yard interception return for TD

How They Got There: Seattle – d. New Orleans, 23-15; d. San Francisco, 23-17 (NFC Championship). Denver – d. San Diego Chargers, 24-17; d. New England, 26-16 (AFC Championship).

In what was expected to be the first cold-weather Super Bowl – but instead kicked off in pleasant 49-degree conditions at MetLife Stadium – Seattle cruised past the Broncos. The game featured the quickest points to open a Super Bowl; the Seahawks scored on a safety just 12 seconds into the contest. More big plays followed. Seattle LB Malcolm Smith, the first defender in 11 years to be named the game's MVP, broke things open by bringing back a second-quarter interception 69 yards for a touchdown, and Percy Harvin returned the second half kickoff 87 yards for another Seattle TD, making the score 29-0.

METLIFE STADIUM
East Rutherford, N.J.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Seattle	8	14	14	7	43
Denver	0	0	8	0	8

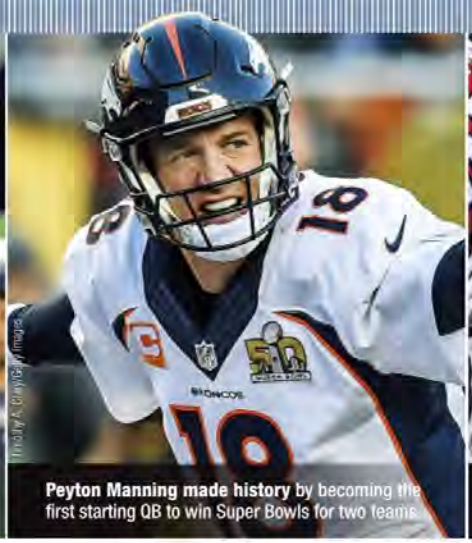
1st Quarter
SEA Safety, Moreno tackled in end zone, 0:12
SEA Hauschka 31 FG, 4:39
SEA Hauschka 33 FG, 12:44

2nd Quarter
SEA Lynch 1 run (Hauschka kick), 3:00
SEA Smith 69 interception return (Hauschka kick), 11:39

3rd Quarter
SEA Harvin 87 kickoff return (Hauschka kick), 0:12
SEA Kearse 23 pass from Wilson (Hauschka kick), 12:02
DEN D. Thomas 14 pass from Manning (Welker pass from Manning), 15:00

4th Quarter
SEA Baldwin 10 pass from Wilson (Hauschka kick), 3:15

Rob Gronkowski (87) and Julian Edelman (11) each caught TD passes in New England's victory.



Peyton Manning made history by becoming the first starting QB to win Super Bowls for two teams.

James White (28) was the catalyst for the Patriots' huge comeback victory in Super Bowl LI.

SUPER BOWL XLIX
FEBRUARY 1, 2015

New England Patriots 28
Seattle Seahawks 24

Attendance: 70,288

MVP: Tom Brady (QB), Patriots
37 of 50 passing, 328 yards, 4 TDs

How They Got There: New England – d. Baltimore, 35-31; d. Indianapolis, 45-7 (AFC Championship). Seattle – d. Carolina, 31-17; d. Green Bay, 28-22 in OT (NFC Championship).

Tom Brady threw four touchdown passes, including the go-ahead score to Julian Edelman with 2:02 remaining, and Malcolm Butler intercepted a pass at the goal line with 20 seconds left to preserve the Patriots' fourth Super Bowl win. Brady's third TD throw was his 12th in the Super Bowl, breaking Joe Montana's record. Still, Seattle nearly pulled off an improbable victory, moving deep into New England territory on Jermaine Kearse's acrobatic 33-yard catch, before Butler came up big two plays later, stepping in front of a pass for the game-saving pickoff.

UNIVERSITY OF PHOENIX STADIUM
Glendale, Ariz.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
New England	0	14	0	14	28
Seattle	0	14	10	0	24

2nd Quarter
NE LaFell 11 pass from Brady (Gostkowski kick), 5:13
SEA Lynch 3 run (Hauschka kick), 12:44
NE Gronkowski 22 pass from Brady (Gostkowski kick), 14:29
SEA Matthews 11 pass from Wilson (Hauschka kick), 14:58

3rd Quarter
SEA Hauschka 27 FG, 3:51
SEA Baldwin 3 pass from Wilson (Hauschka kick), 10:06

4th Quarter
NE Amendola 4 pass from Brady (Gostkowski kick), 7:05
NE Edelman 3 pass from Brady (Gostkowski kick), 12:58

SUPER BOWL 50
FEBRUARY 7, 2016

Denver Broncos 24
Carolina Panthers 10

Attendance: 71,088

MVP: Von Miller (LB), Broncos
6 tackles, 2.5 sacks, 2 forced fumbles

How They Got There: Denver – d. Pittsburgh, 20-13; d. New England, 20-18 (AFC Championship). Carolina – d. Seattle, 31-24; d. Arizona, 49-15 (NFC Championship).

Defense carried the day for the Broncos, who won their third Super Bowl title by flustering the Panthers' offense. Denver recorded seven sacks and linebacker Von Miller forced a pair of fumbles that led to the team's two TDs. The first was scooped up by teammate Malik Jackson in the end zone for a 10-0 lead; the second led to C.J. Anderson's short scoring run. T.J. Ward did his part, too, with seven tackles and one pass defensed. The victory was the 200th in Peyton Manning's career and made him the first starting QB to win Super Bowls with two different franchises, while Gary Kubiak became the first person to win a Super Bowl as a player and a head coach for the same team.

LEVI'S STADIUM
San Francisco, Calif.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Carolina	0	7	0	3	10
Denver	10	3	3	8	24

1st Quarter
DEN McManus 34 FG, 4:17
DEN Jackson 0 fumble return (McManus kick), 8:33

2nd Quarter
CAR Stewart 1 run (Gano kick), 3:35
DEN McManus 33 FG, 8:02

3rd Quarter
DEN McManus 30 FG, 6:42

4th Quarter
CAR Gano 39 FG, 4:39
DEN Anderson 2 run (Manning pass to Fowler), 11:52

SUPER BOWL LI
FEBRUARY 5, 2017

New England Patriots 34 (OT)
Atlanta Falcons 28

Attendance: 70,807

MVP: Tom Brady (QB), Patriots
43 of 62 passing, 466 yards, 2 TDs

How They Got There: New England – d. Houston, 34-16; d. Pittsburgh, 36-17 (AFC Championship). Atlanta – d. Seattle, 36-20; d. Green Bay, 44-21 (NFC Championship).

New England staged the biggest comeback in Super Bowl history, rallying from a 25-point deficit late in the third quarter to prevail in overtime for the franchise's fifth championship. It would have been hard to imagine such an outcome after Matt Ryan's six-yard touchdown pass to Tevin Coleman gave Atlanta a 28-3 lead, but Patriots QB Tom Brady – who became the first four-time Super Bowl MVP – made it happen. He threw TD passes to James White and Danny Amendola, Stephen Gostkowski kicked a 33-yard field goal, and a White touchdown run and a two-point conversion then tied it to cap a frantic final 17 minutes of regulation. White won the game with a two-yard TD run on the first possession of overtime.

NRG STADIUM
Houston, Texas

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	F
New England	0	3	6	19	6	34
Atlanta	0	21	7	0	0	28

2nd Quarter
ATL Freeman 5 run (Bryant kick), 2:45
ATL Hooper 19 pass from Ryan (Bryant kick), 6:12
ATL Alford 82 interception return (Bryant kick), 12:39
NE Gostkowski 41 FG, 14:58

3rd Quarter
ATL Coleman 6 pass from Ryan (Bryant kick), 6:29
NE White 5 pass from Brady (kick failed), 12:54

4th Quarter
NE Gostkowski 33 FG, 5:16
NE Amendola 6 pass from Brady (White run), 9:04
NE White 1 run (Brady pass to Amendola), 14:03

Overtime
NE White 2 run, 3:58

Zach Ertz stretches across the goal line with the go-ahead TD in the Eagles' Super Bowl triumph.

The Washington Redskins appeared in five NFL championship games between 1937 and 1945, winning the title twice, including the 1942 team that defeated the Bears, 14-6, at Griffith Stadium.

SUPER BOWL LII

FEBRUARY 4, 2018

Philadelphia Eagles	41
New England Patriots	33

Attendance: 67,612

MVP: Nick Foles (QB), Eagles
28 of 43 passing, 373 yards, 3 TDs; 1 TD reception

How They Got There: Philadelphia – d. Atlanta, 15-10; d. Minnesota, 38-7 (NFC Championship). New England – d. Tennessee, 35-14; d. Jacksonville, 24-20 (AFC Championship).

Zach Ertz's TD catch with 2:21 remaining put the Eagles ahead, but it took a big defensive play by Brandon Graham and Derek Barnett to preserve the victory. Graham strip-sacked QB Tom Brady on the Patriots' next possession and Barnett recovered the loose ball. The game featured 1,151 total yards, the most ever in an NFL game, and Brady threw for a Super Bowl-record 505 yards. MVP Nick Foles became the first player to both throw and catch a TD pass in the Super Bowl.

U.S. BANK STADIUM
Minneapolis, Minn.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Philadelphia	9	13	7	12	41
New England	3	9	14	7	33

1st Quarter

PHI Elliott 25 FG, 7:05
NE Gostkowski 26 FG, 10:43
PHI Jeffery 34 pass from Foles (kick failed), 12:26

2nd Quarter

PHI Blount 21 run (pass failed), 6:12
NE Gostkowski 45 FG, 7:36
NE White 26 run (kick failed), 12:56
PHI Foles 1 pass from Burton (Elliott kick), 14:26

3rd Quarter

NE Gronkowski 5 pass from Brady (Gostkowski kick), 2:45
PHI Clement 22 pass from Foles (Elliott kick), 7:42
NE Hogan 26 pass from Brady (Gostkowski kick), 11:37

4th Quarter

PHI Elliott 42 FG, 0:51
NE Gronkowski 4 pass from Brady (Gostkowski kick), 5:36
PHI Ertz 11 pass from Foles (pass failed), 12:39
PHI Elliott 46 FG, 13:55

AFL/NFL CHAMPIONS

From 1920-1931, the NFL championship was awarded to the team with the best regular-season record, but a first-place tie in 1932 forced a "playoff" and led the league to adopt a championship game format a year later. The AFL began play in 1960, and from 1966-1969 the two leagues held separate title games with the winners meeting in the Super Bowl.

NFL Champions

1920 Akron Pros
1921 Chicago Staleys
1922 Canton Bulldogs
1923 Canton Bulldogs
1924 Cleveland Bulldogs
1925 Chicago Cardinals
1926 Frankford Yellow Jackets
1927 New York Giants
1928 Providence Steam Roller
1929 Green Bay Packers
1930 Green Bay Packers
1931 Green Bay Packers
1932 @ Chicago Bears 9, Portsmouth Spartans 0
1933 @ Chicago Bears 23, New York Giants 21
1934 @ New York Giants 30, Chicago Bears 13
1935 @ Detroit Lions 26, New York Giants 7
1936* Green Bay Packers 21, Boston Braves 6
1937 Washington Redskins 28, @ Chicago Bears 21
1938 @ New York Giants 23, Green Bay Packers 17
1939 @ Green Bay Packers 27, New York Giants 0
1940 Chicago Bears 73, @ Washington Redskins 0
1941 @ Chicago Bears 37, New York Giants 9
1942 @ Washington Redskins 14, Chicago Bears 6
1943 @ Chicago Bears 41, Washington Redskins 21
1944 Green Bay Packers 14, @ New York Giants 7
1945 @ Cleveland Rams 15, Washington Redskins 14
1946 Chicago Bears 24, @ New York Giants 14
1947 @ Chicago Cardinals 28, Philadelphia Eagles 21
1948 @ Philadelphia Eagles 7, Chicago Cardinals 0
1949 Philadelphia Eagles 14, @ Los Angeles Rams 0
1950 @ Cleveland Browns 30, Los Angeles Rams 28
1951 @ Los Angeles Rams 24, Cleveland Browns 17
1952 Detroit Lions 17, @ Cleveland Browns 7
1953 @ Detroit Lions 17, Cleveland Browns 16
1954 @ Cleveland Browns 56, Detroit Lions 10
1955 Cleveland Browns 38, @ Los Angeles Rams 14
1956 @ New York Giants 47, Chicago Bears 7
1957 @ Detroit Lions 59, Cleveland Browns 14
1958 Baltimore Colts 23, @ New York Giants 17 (OT)
1959 @ Baltimore Colts 31, New York Giants 16
1960 @ Philadelphia Eagles 17, Green Bay Packers 13
1961 @ Green Bay Packers 37, New York Giants 0
1962 Green Bay Packers 16, @ New York Giants 7
1963 @ Chicago Bears 14, New York Giants 10
1964 @ Cleveland Browns 27, Baltimore Colts 0
1965 @ Green Bay Packers 23, Cleveland Browns 12
1966 Green Bay Packers 34, @ Dallas Cowboys 27
1967 @ Green Bay Packers 21, Dallas Cowboys 17
1968 Baltimore Colts 34, @ Cleveland Browns 0
1969 @ Minnesota Vikings 27, Cleveland Browns 7

AFL Champions

1960 @ Houston Oilers 24, Los Angeles Chargers 16
1961 Houston Oilers 10, @ San Diego Chargers 3
1962 Dallas Texans 20, @ Houston Oilers 17 (OT)
1963 @ San Diego Chargers 51, Boston Patriots 10
1964 @ Buffalo Bills 20, San Diego Chargers 7
1965 Buffalo Bills 23, @ San Diego Chargers 0
1966 Kansas City Chiefs 31, @ Buffalo Bills 7
1967 @ Oakland Raiders 40, Houston Oilers 7
1968 @ New York Jets 27, Oakland Raiders 23
1969 Kansas City Chiefs 17, @ Oakland Raiders 7

*Played at the Polo Grounds (New York, N.Y.)

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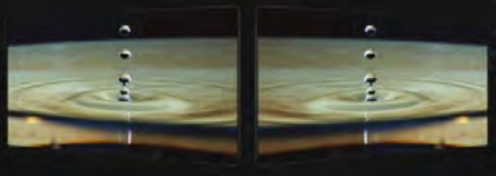

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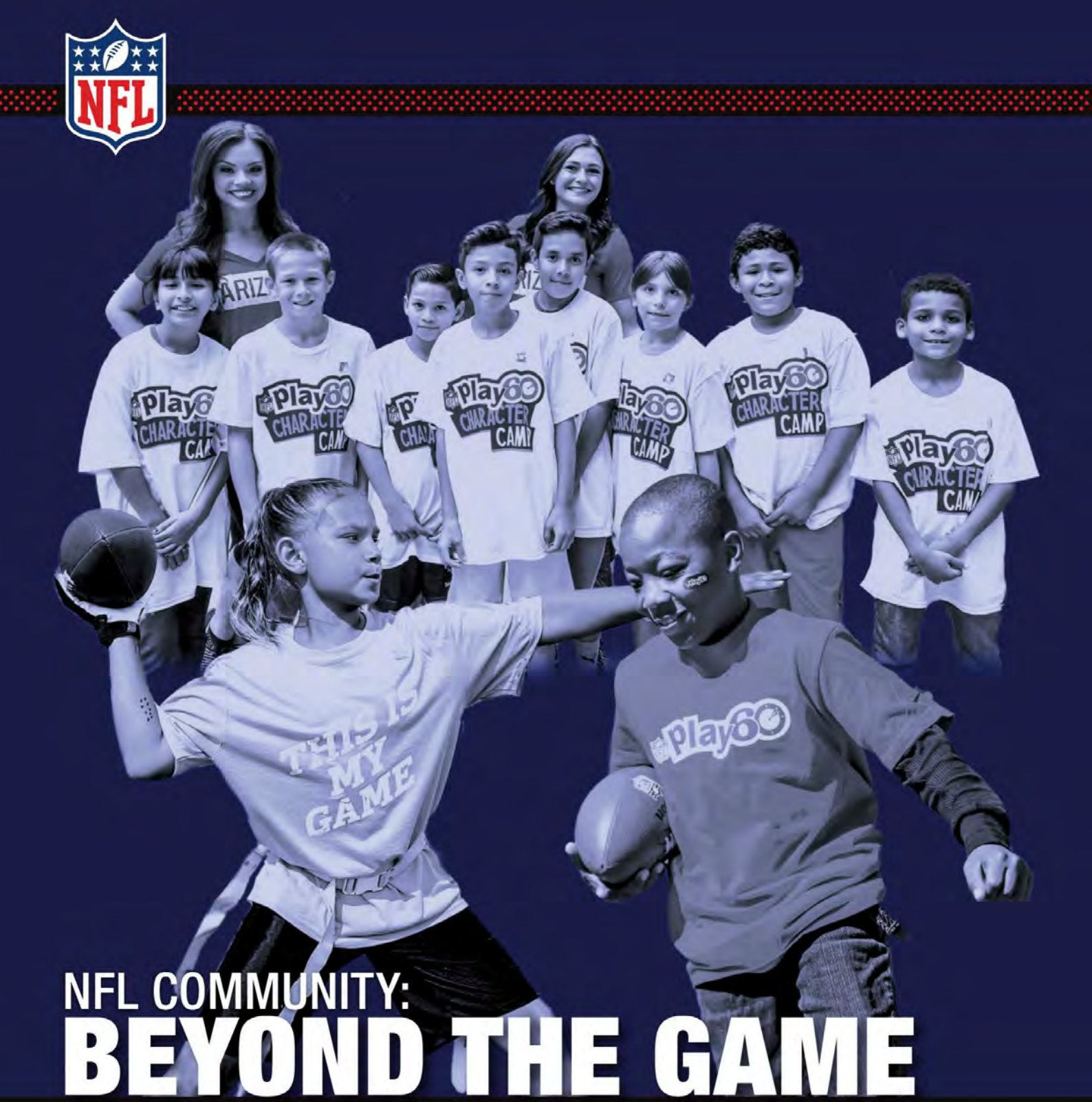

NFL COMMUNITY: BEYOND THE GAME

Football and community are the twin pillars of the NFL. Whether nationally at the league level, locally at the team level, or individually through the volunteerism and philanthropy of owners, players, coaches, and club personnel, there exists a powerful NFL-wide commitment to giving back. The NFL embraces its role in unifying our communities, addressing key social issues, and serving as a force for positive change.

NFL PLAY 60 is the league's national youth health and wellness campaign to encourage kids to get active for at least 60 minutes a day. Since PLAY 60 launched in 2007, the NFL has committed more than $350 million to youth health and fitness through PLAY 60 programming, grants, and media time for public service announcements.

More than 2,000 PLAY 60 events are held annually, and more than 250 NFL Youth Fitness Zones have been constructed, providing millions of kids with access and resources to play. Thousands of NFL players have served as PLAY 60 Ambassadors, dedicating their time to getting youth in their communities more active through football clinics, school assemblies, PSAs, and other outreach activities.

Fuel Up to Play 60 is a leading in-school nutrition and physical activity program launched by the NFL and the National Dairy Council (NDC), which was founded by America's dairy farmers, in collaboration with the USDA. It is designed to engage and empower youth to take action for their own health by implementing long-term, positive changes for themselves and their schools. As a result of the program, more than 18 million students are getting more physically active during the school day and more than 14 million are making better food choices.

For the fifth consecutive season, the NFL, through Fuel Up to Play 60, is providing a $10,000 Hometown Grant in each of the NFL's 32 markets to help local school districts and individual schools improve their nutrition and physical activity initiatives.

Additionally, 4.3 million students in 4,700 schools nationwide have the opportunity to get active before, during, and after school through the NFL FLAG-In-Schools Program supported by the NFL Foundation and Fuel Up to Play 60. Fuel Up to Play 60 en español, an evolution of the national flagship program, is in its fourth year and encourages Spanish-speaking communities nationwide to live healthier lifestyles through good nutrition and physical activity.

American Heart Association is an NFL PLAY 60 partner engaging more than 4.5 million students in PLAY 60 physical activity programming. The NFL and American Heart Association, together with Discovery Education, have collaborated to bring physically active lifestyles to schools and homes across the country through virtual field trips.

Available free of charge to classrooms nationwide, the NFL PLAY 60 virtual experience includes a virtual viewing party guide and a classroom activity designed to get the entire classroom up and moving. To view these digital lesson plans, visit **aha-nflplay60challenge.org**.

Additionally, the NFL and American Heart Association have enhanced the NFL PLAY 60 app, which inspires young fans to get moving through fun, interactive games. Download the app at **nfl.com/play60**.

NFL PLAY 60 All-Ability

It's important that all kids have the opportunity and access to be physically active each day. The NFL partners with organizations to create these opportunities to PLAY 60.

The NFL and **Special Olympics** are committed to building inclusive communities and providing opportunities for athletes of all abilities to participate in sports through the expansion of Special Olympics Unified Flag Football, where individuals with and without intellectual disabilities play on the same team.

Since kicking off its national partnership with Special Olympics in 2017, the NFL has amplified this relationship through community programs at marquee events such as the Super Bowl, NFL Draft Week, and NFL Kickoff Week. With contributions from the NFL Foundation in 2018, Special Olympics provided grants to local Special Olympics Programs in 15 states to help enhance Unified Sports programming and increase participation of athletes, Unified partners, and coaches across the country.

NFL PLAY 60 is the "Official Champion of Play" at **St. Jude Children's Research Hospital®**, which is leading the way the world understands, treats, and defeats childhood cancer and other life-threatening diseases. Since 2012, the NFL has raised more than $1 million for St. Jude through donations and the sale of items on NFL Auction. This partnership has given patients unique experiences at NFL events and raised support and awareness for the lifesaving mission of St. Jude: Finding cures. Saving children.®

The NFL and **Shriners Hospitals for Children** continue to provide opportunities for children with different physical abilities to live an active and healthy lifestyle so that no child is left on the sidelines. The NFL has teamed with Shriners Hospitals to create a free NFL PLAY 60 All-Ability Guide, which includes adaptive activities for children. The All-Ability guide is available at **nfl.com/play60**.

NFL Foundation Invests In Us

THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE FOUNDATION is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of those touched by the game of football – from players at all levels to communities across the country. It represents the 32 NFL clubs and supports the health, safety, and wellness of athletes, youth football, and the communities that support our game.

Through a multi-year grant, the NFL Foundation has helped USA Football in these efforts. USA Football, the sport's national governing body, has taken a leadership role in the design and creation of the Football Development Model (FDM), a framework for the sport that will provide stakeholders and programs a roadmap to effectively teach the sport in progressive, developmental, and age-appropriate ways. Visit **usafootball.com** for more information.

The Foundation also encourages active and healthy living by providing grants to the American Heart Association and The Cooper Institute to power the NFL PLAY 60 campaigns. Additionally, since 1998, the NFL Foundation has provided more than $61 million to revitalize 518 athletic fields nationwide for youth athletics, providing safe and accessible places to play.

NFL club foundations also receive grants from the NFL Foundation to help provide NFL PLAY 60 programs in their communities as well as programs and events that support cancer awareness, military appreciation, social justice, social responsibility, volunteerism, and youth football. The NFL Foundation also supports players' philanthropic and community efforts and provides multiple grant opportunities to current players and NFL Legends for these purposes. Visit **nflfoundation.org** for more information.

The NFL Foundation is also committed to helping individuals and entire school communities learn about the importance of developing character and healthy relationships. By investing more than $6.5 million to date in initiatives that are interactive, engaging, and provide tangible results, the NFL Foundation works to ensure that middle and high school students have the education and tools necessary to build moral character, foster healthy relationships, navigate complex decision-making, and improve conflict resolution. These efforts include the InSideOut Initiative and the NFL/United Way Character Playbook program.

The InSideOut Initiative, co-founded by NFL legend Joe Ehrmann and Minnesota High School League associate director Jody Redman, is helping transform the "win-at-all-costs" sports culture in high school communities into one that defines and promotes the life-sustaining development of the athlete's inner life. Powered by the NFL Foundation, the InSideOut Initiative builds partnerships with educational leaders, state athletic associations, and NFL clubs to redefine the role of inter-scholastic sports and help develop the educational, social, and emotional well-being of each student-athlete. Learn more at **insideoutinitiative.org**.

The NFL/United Way Character Playbook program is a digital education program that helps middle school students learn how to cultivate and maintain healthy relationships. The NFL, United Way, and digital learning innovator EVERFI, Inc., created this scalable and evidenced-based program, which has been rolled out in all 32 NFL market communities over the past three years. Character Playbook consists of six interactive modules that support positive character development, social-emotional learning, and healthy relationships for students in grades 7-9. By the end of the program's second year, more than 255,000 students in 2,581 schools had participated. Learn more at **characterplaybook.com**.

SUPER BOWL LIII LEGACY GRANT TO BENEFIT ATLANTA'S WESTSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD

Each year, the Super Bowl serves as a catalyst to support the local community in a significant and lasting way. The NFL, via the NFL Foundation, is supporting its Super Bowl Legacy Grant initiative through the Atlanta Super Bowl Host Committee's *Legacy 53* initiative, which includes investment in and renovation of John F. Kennedy Park in Atlanta's historic Westside neighborhood.

This $2 million capital improvement project – supported by funding from the NFL Foundation, Atlanta Super Bowl Host Committee, and The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation – will help foster play and healthy lifestyles for students at the nearby Hollis Innovation Academy as well as the Westside community, providing a versatile playing field for athletic competition and a safe space for exercise and outdoor activities.

The renovations at J.F. Kennedy Park will include a full-level turf field playing surface, community walking path, Fit-Trail exercise system for fitness training, new playground equipment with soft turf underpinning, a shade picnic pavilion, and lighting. Additionally, J.F. Kennedy Park playground equipment will be repurposed, upgraded, and placed in nearby Ashby Circle Park.

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Highlighting Hispanic Fan Engagement

THE NFL CONTINUES TO GROW ITS 360-DEGREE PLATFORM of customized offerings for its strong and growing base of more than 28 million Hispanic fans. These offerings include: Hispanic-focused youth and football education programming; multi-platform Spanish-language media partnerships with ESPN Deportes, FOX Deportes, Entravision, and mitú; customized content; and Latino community outreach efforts throughout the season.

As part of this commitment, the NFL and all 32 clubs recognize Hispanic Heritage Month with a series of special events spanning Weeks 2-6. This year, the NFL continued with the theme of "Feel the Orgullo." In Spanish, "orgullo" means pride. Latino players, fans, and coaches have a strong sense of pride, not only in their culture but in their teams and the NFL.

Also in 2018, the NFL and the Hispanic Heritage Foundation partnered for the eighth annual NFL Hispanic Heritage Leadership Awards presented by Nationwide. The awards recognize the contributions of Hispanic leaders in each NFL market. Winners selected a non-profit organization of their choice that serves the local Hispanic community to receive a $2,000 donation.

This season also marked the fourth year of the league's Fuel Up to Play 60 en español, an evolution of its national flagship program. The platform encourages predominantly Hispanic communities nationwide to live healthier lifestyles through good nutrition and physical activity. This resource also offers Spanish-language content and materials, extending the reach and access of the program to students, teachers, and families across the country.

For the seventh year in a row, the NFL has partnered with Hall of Fame offensive tackle Anthony Muñoz to host 12 NFL PLAY60 Character Camps focused on offering Latino youth opportunities to play and experience the game of football. The camps' mission is to make a positive impact on youth through teaching football skills, emphasizing exercise, and reinforcing the importance of character in athletics and life.

For NFL news, videos, articles, analysis, and more updates in Spanish, visit **nfl.com/español**.

Business Connect member Tammy Hurt celebrates winning a Super Bowl LIII contract.

Lynsey Weatherspoon, ATL Business Connect Member

BUSINESS CONNECT: THE IMPACT IS PERSONAL

Tammy Hurt is an Atlanta-based event planner. She's worked every kind of civic and corporate event imaginable, and now she's working a Super Bowl LIII event. Hurt, who owns Outsource Events, joined the Super Bowl LIII Business Connect program in May 2018. Her goal: raise the profile of her business and compete to win a coveted Super Bowl contract.

Hurt was one of more than 225 diverse local vendors accepted into Business Connect, the NFL's special event supplier diversity program. In partnership with the Atlanta Super Bowl Host Committee, Business Connect was charged with helping to grow the economic impact of the Super Bowl in local communities by identifying and preparing event-ready minority-, women-, LGBT-, and veteran-owned businesses to compete and win contracts with Super Bowl event planners.

The program offered a full slate of professional development workshops, Pitch Day events, and networking programming designed to grow the capabilities of vendors to compete for Super Bowl contracts and to position them to secure new work in their home market post-Super Bowl.

As a result of Hurt's diligence, she won a contract with the Atlanta Super Bowl Host Committee and NFL contractor KREATE. Her team is charged with sourcing entertainment, scenic décor, and creative elements that will dazzle Host Committee guests on Super Bowl Sunday.

The program wrapped up at the Super Bowl LIII Business Connect Celebration honoring the local suppliers and NFL contractors who've best utilized Business Connect over the past year.

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Engaging Our Communities

THE NFL EMBRACES ITS ROLE in unifying communities and serving as a force for positive change. The league and its teams are committed to implementing consistent and thoughtful responses to societal issues by educating the NFL family, instituting transparent policies, and actively engaging with communities to positively impact society.

The league focuses its efforts on social issues that include character education, domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking prevention, as well as its ongoing work with teams, players, and the Players Coalition on social justice.

In recent years, the NFL has engaged with players, owners, clubs, public officials, and law enforcement, as well as many other individuals and organizations, to identify meaningful ways to strengthen communities on issues pertaining specifically to social justice. The NFL, in conjunction with its players, is focusing on three key areas: Education and Economic Advancement; Community-Police Relations; and the Criminal Justice System.

In addition, the league continues to educate its staff, teams, players, and the public about domestic violence and sexual assault, as well as identifying steps that can prevent them before they occur. All NFL and team employees and personnel – more than 6,000 in total – participated in year five of social responsibility education during the 2018 season.

The league also continued its practice of meeting with employees of local domestic violence and sexual assault (DV/SA) organizations in conjunction with major NFL events.

The goal of these meetings is to update the groups on the league's social responsibility work and to listen to them on issues facing the field and ways the NFL and its clubs can help.

Additionally, the NFL continues its support for its partners at the National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC) and the National Domestic Violence Hotline (The Hotline).

For more information, visit **nfl.com/community**.

CLUB INVOLVEMENT

MEET THE GREEN TEAM

NFL GREEN

For more than 25 years, the NFL, in partnership with the local Super Bowl Host Committee, has developed projects to address the environmental impact of Super Bowl events and create a positive community legacy. These efforts are continuing at Super Bowl LIII in Atlanta.

Solid Waste Management/Recycling: Solid waste from major Super Bowl event venues is being reduced by recycling and composting. Recycled aluminum from Mercedes-Benz Stadium will raise funds for Habitat for Humanity to build housing for local families.

E-Waste Recycling: A public recycling rally was held two weeks before Super Bowl LIII in partnership with Zoo Atlanta and Verizon. Residents dropped off electronic waste to be responsibly recycled. Recycling the minerals in these items helps protect animal habitats where those materials are mined.

Prepared Food Recovery: Extra prepared food from events, as well as beverages and snack foods, are being donated to local food recovery agencies.

Material Donation: Reusable materials from Super Bowl events, including office supplies, building materials, and décor, are being donated locally for reuse/repurposing.

Super Kids – Super Sharing: This is the 20th anniversary of Super Kids, which began in Atlanta in 2000.This year, 100 local schools participated in this community service project to share

books, sports equipment, games, and school supplies with children in need during an event at the Infinite Energy Center's Forum. At this event, Verizon made an $18,000 donation to the Ron Clark Academy.

Climate Change Initiatives:

- Renewable energy certificates are being used to offset energy usage at major Super Bowl venues.
- Verizon, the Host Committee, and the NFL funded 14 community grants for urban forestry, pollinator habitat, and community gardens.

PLAYER CARE FOUNDATION

CARING FOR THOSE WHO CONTRIBUTED

The NFL Player Care Foundation (PCF) is an independent foundation created in 2007 through a partnership among NFL owners, the NFL Players Association, Pro Football Hall of Fame, and the NFL Alumni Association.

It is dedicated to helping retired NFL players improve their quality of life by addressing their medical, emotional, financial, social, and community needs. Resources and referrals to provide assistance are also identified for retired players to support these needs.

Since its inception, PCF has screened more than 5,300 retired players and identified numerous medical issues that were addressed immediately, thus saving lives. In addition to hosting 10 Healthy Body & Mind screening events each year, PCF has provided more than $16.1 million to former players in need through financial grants and educational scholarships.

PCF, supported by the NFL Alumni Association, is proud to partner with one of the nation's premier medical providers – Tulane University School of Medicine – to conduct its annual Super Bowl Week Healthy Body & Mind Screening program.

This complimentary national program is open to all former NFL players and includes cardiovascular and prostate screenings, and mental health resources.

To learn more about the work of the NFL Player Care Foundation, please visit **nflplayercare.com** or email **dana.lihan@nfl.com**.

Tulane University SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

NFL ALUMNI

Play Smart. Play Safe.

PLAY SMART PLAY SAFE

THE NFL'S NUMBER ONE PRIORITY is the health and safety of its players. In collaboration with the NFLPA, we seek to ensure players have access to unparalleled medical care and that our policies and protocols are informed by the most up-to-date scientific and medical consensus.

Through the Play Smart. Play Safe. initiative, launched in 2016, the league continues to drive progress in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of injuries, enhance medical protocols, and further improve the way our game is taught and played. As part of the initiative, the league has been funding a five-year, $60 million project called the Engineering Roadmap – an effort to drive developments in engineering, biomechanics, and material science designed to better protect against injuries in sports – as well as granting $40 million to fund medical research, primarily dedicated to neuroscience.

This season, the NFL launched an Injury Reduction Plan with the goal of reducing concussions. NFL leaders, clubs, and the wide variety of experts in medicine, engineering, and science who form the NFL medical committees developed an approach to drive behavioral changes by moving players into better-performing helmets and enforcing rules changes aimed at eliminating potentially risky behavior. Through these latest changes, the NFL continues to leverage data in an effort to improve player safety and evolve the game.

Additionally, the NFL and NFLPA made a number of enhancements to the Concussion Protocol, including a third unaffiliated neurotrauma consultant (UNC) who monitors the broadcast video and audio feeds of each game, and notifies on-field UNCs of possible head, neck, or spine injuries. In 2018, the NFL Concussion Protocol was published in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine* (BJSM), which marked the first sports league protocol of its kind to be published in a peer-reviewed medical journal.

To learn more about all the NFL's health and safety work, visit **playsmartplaysafe.com**.

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Supporting our veterans

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Growing the Game

IN SUPPORT OF THE NFL'S VISION to grow the game of football and engage youth participants, the "Play Football" initiative was launched in 2016. The initiative aims to support the growth of the game through leadership in data and analytics, service, education, and communications.

In April 2018, the Play Football Summer Season platform was introduced across the league to highlight summer football in communities across the country, encourage participation in summer youth and high school football activities, and increase visibility of grassroots camps hosted by partners, NFL clubs, and current and former NFL players.

PLAY FOOTBALL.COM

During the 2018 Hall of Fame Enshrinement Week, NFL Youth Football celebrated hundreds of youth and high school football players alongside Pro Football Hall of Famers in Canton, Ohio. These youngsters took part in numerous NFL Play Football activities, including the Hall of Fame's annual "First Play" and the Play Football Skills Camp.

This year's Pro Bowl afforded NFL Youth Football the opportunity to develop, lead, and collaborate with many youth, high school, and coaching groups on activating the largest league calendar platforms. Pro Bowl Week events included: NFL FLAG Opening Night; the NFL FLAG Championships; Play Football Friday Night Experience; and the announcement of the 2018 Don Shula NFL High School Coach of the Year winner.

Through the NFL's partnership with USA Football, more than one million kids are prioritizing safer play. The partnership has an increased focus on educating parents, removing barriers to play, and ensuring that all participants have an entry point to the game. Heads Up Football education continues to grow, and NFL FLAG has more than 450,000 kids playing across the country.

Learn more about the PLAY Football initiative by visiting **playfootball.com** or follow **@NFLPlayFootball**. Join the conversation on social media using **#WEPLAYFOOTBALL**.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE COACHES

DON SHULA HIGH SCHOOL COACH OF THE YEAR

The Don Shula NFL High School Coach of the Year Award was created to honor exemplary high school football coaches who display the integrity, achievement, and leadership demonstrated by Don Shula, the winningest coach in NFL history and a two-time Super Bowl champion.

Nominations are submitted by the league's 32 clubs, and this year's winner was announced during the 2019 Pro Bowl. The NFL Foundation contributes $40,000 in grant awards, with the winner receiving $25,000 ($15,000 going to his school's football program). The winner and runner-up are honored at the Pro Bowl and during Super Bowl Week.

Last year's recipient was Robert Garrett, the head coach at Crenshaw High School in Los Angeles, Calif.

Gregory Payan/AP Images

NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell (left) with 2017 Shula Award winner Robert Garrett

madd NO MORE VICTIMS

MADD AND NFL TACKLE DRUNK DRIVING

Last year, drunk driving claimed the lives of more than 10,800 people and injured over 290,000 others. MADD and the NFL understand that's unacceptable and remain focused on one number – zero. Zero deaths. Zero injuries. Zero families impacted by impaired driving.

Since 2010, Mothers Against Drunk Driving and the NFL have worked together to eliminate drunk driving and remind fans that the most valuable player of the game is the designated driver.

Over the last five years, more than 1.4 million fans have signed up to be designated drivers, and many NFL teams work with MADD volunteers on game day to educate fans about the important role of a non-drinking designated driver and how to sign up as one.

The NFL also works with MADD to increase league and team staff awareness of the dangers of drunk driving as part of the NFL's annual Social Responsibility education. During the 2018 preseason, the MADD team – in partnership with the NFL's Player Engagement department – traveled across the country during the Rookie Transition Program to help rookies understand the impact of drunk driving, the power they have as role models, and to have a plan to get home safely when their plans include alcohol.

"We are grateful for the opportunity that this partnership provides to build safer communities by helping fans and players understand the importance of designating a non-drinking driver," said Vicki Knox, MADD Interim CEO.

Together, the NFL and MADD are working to create a future of No More Victims®.

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Crucial Catch

THE NFL, ITS CLUBS, PLAYERS, and the American Cancer Society are committed to the fight against cancer. Crucial Catch expands the impact of the NFL's work around breast cancer to address multiple types of cancer through early detection and risk reduction.

Since 2009, this partnership has raised more than $18.5 million in support of the American Cancer Society and its mission to save lives, celebrate lives, and lead the fight for a world without cancer. Money raised through the Crucial Catch program funds grants that help people in underserved communities receive potentially lifesaving screening resources.

With the NFL's support, the American Cancer Society's Community Health Advocates implementing Nationwide Grants for Empowerment and Equity (CHANGE) program has awarded grants to more than 80 health system partners to address cancer prevention, early detection, and timely access to follow-up care. In 2018, an additional $3.2 million in grants was awarded to health systems in these markets to address disparities in breast cancer mortality that exist among women of color. The 10-year partnership has led to over 750,000 people impacted, particularly in high-risk communities.

Throughout October, NFL games featured multi-colored Crucial Catch branding on the field and in stadiums to represent multiple cancers – including breast, colorectal, lung, cervical, prostate, and childhood – all to provide education and raise awareness of how cancer has impacted the lives of people in our communities on many levels.

As part of the expanded Crucial Catch campaign, the NFL and American Cancer Society teamed up to develop and provide individuals nationwide with The Defender, a free digital assessment tool that helps consumers better understand and reduce their cancer risk. The tool provides users with personalized, quick, and informative recommendations on how they can take action and adapt their lifestyles to reduce their risk of cancer.

To learn more about these efforts, visit **nfl.com/crucialcatch**.

Below the Belt:

Pain Men Shouldn't Ignore

Gentlemen, pain below the belt should never be ignored. Here are a few things you should keep in mind if you experience pain in the **pelvic** or **groin** area.

Painful Urination

Symptoms:
You feel pain or a burning sensation when urinating. You may also have frequent urges to urinate without results.

What it could be:
You may have a urinary tract infection (UTI), enlarged prostate or an early sign of bladder cancer.

What you should do:
Schedule an appointment with your doctor or urologist. You may need antibiotics to treat the infection. Because UTIs are not common in men, you may be advised to have other tests to determine if something else is causing the UTI.

Pain in the Pelvic Area

Symptoms:
You have a hard time urinating, have pain in the pelvic area and feel like you have flu-like symptoms.

What it could be:
Prostatitis, which is an inflammation or infection of the prostate gland.

What you should do:
Make an appointment to see your health care provider. Prostatitis may get better on its own, but if it is caused by a bacterial infection, you may need antibiotics.

Urology Care FOUNDATION™

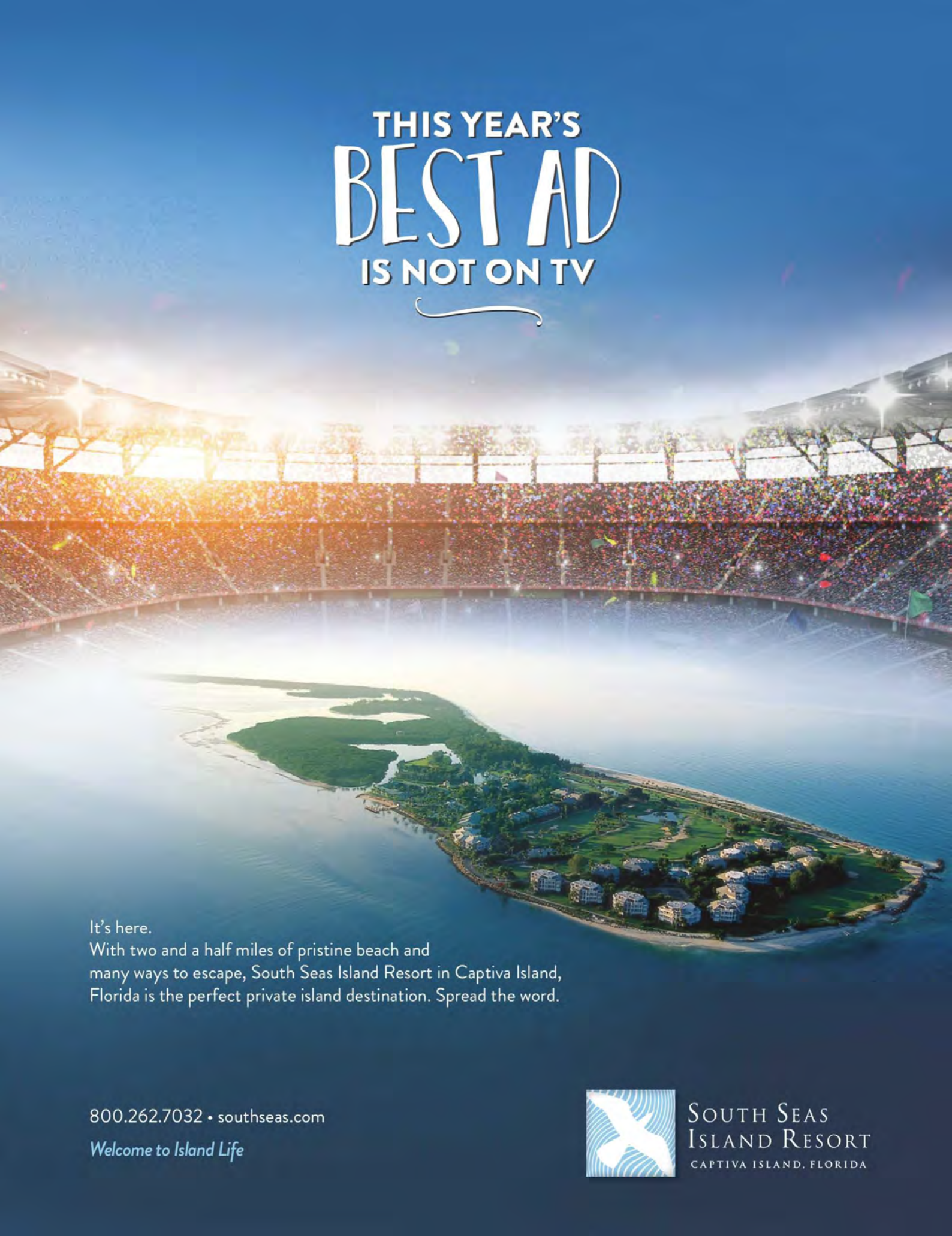
For more information, visit UrologyHealth.org.

Sudden Testicular Pain

Symptoms:
Imagine the pain that comes with a sharp kick to the groin. It feels much more than just a dull ache and because of it, you may have a hard time talking or walking. It could also include swelling of the scrotum.

What it could be:
Testicular torsion. This condition is when the flow of blood to a testicle gets cut off because the cord that connects the testicles to the body becomes twisted.

What you should do:
Get to a doctor right away. If you do have testicular torsion, it's an emergency because the testicle will become damaged without proper blood flow.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NFL SALUTE TO SERVICE AWARD PRESENTED BY USAA

The NFL Salute to Service Award presented by USAA is given annually to an NFL player, coach, alumnus, or team personnel who demonstrates an exemplary commitment to honoring and supporting the military community.

Team nominations are submitted in October and the award is presented during Super Bowl Week and recognized at the *NFL Honors* awards show. Nominees are evaluated based on the positive effect of the individual's efforts on the military community, the type of service conducted, the thoroughness of the program, and level of commitment.

Andre Roberts

First presented in 2011, recent recipients include: former Panthers defensive end Jared Allen (2014), former Buccaneers wide receiver Vincent Jackson (2015), Falcons head coach Dan Quinn (2016), and current Jets and former Falcons wide receiver Andre Roberts (2017).

A total of $50,000 is donated in the recipient's name, including $25,000 from USAA to the aid societies representing all five military branches. New this year, the NFL will also make a donation of $25,000 to the award recipient's military charity of choice.

USAA, the Official NFL Salute to Service Partner, invites military members throughout the season to participate in exclusive experiences, including hosting military at training camp events, enabling on-base team practices, hosting military at Salute to Service games, and encouraging fans to demonstrate their own military appreciation.

To learn more about this year's Salute to Service Award nominees, visit **nfl.com/salute.**

Saluting Our Military

THE NFL'S SALUTE TO SERVICE is the league's year-round effort to Honor, Empower, and Connect with our nation's service members, veterans, and their families. The league works with its core military nonprofit partners, including the Pat Tillman Foundation, TAPS, USO, the Bob Woodruff Foundation, and Wounded Warrior Project, to fund programs and provide resources that positively impact veterans, active duty military, and their families. Since 2011, more than $26 million has been raised through Salute to Service to support the league's military nonprofit partners.

Honoring the Service and Sacrifice of Military Members and their Families

Throughout the year, the NFL, its clubs, and players honor and recognize service members, veterans, and their families at NFL events.

The NFL partners with TAPS to fund programs that support the families of those who sacrificed their lives serving our country. As a result of this partnership, more than 3,500 TAPS surviving military families have been able to access youth mentorship, counseling, and opportunities to participate in NFL events.

Empowering the Military Community through Partnerships and Resources

By partnering with organizations that support service members, veterans, and their families, the NFL uses its platform and resources to create a positive impact for our nation's heroes.

In an effort to honor leaders who exemplify Pat Tillman's enduring legacy of service, the NFL partners with the Pat Tillman Foundation, providing academic scholarships for more than 580 Tillman Scholars who are now pursuing careers in medicine, business, law, science, education, and the arts.

The NFL partners with Wounded Warrior Project to help provide wounded veterans with free programs and resources that empower them to live their lives to the fullest, on their own terms. The NFL's support has helped WWP fund the expansion of combat stress recovery programs, such as Project Odyssey, and serve more than 150,000 wounded veterans, family members, and care givers.

With a $2 million grant, the NFL helps fund Veteran Support Organizations through the Bob Woodruff Foundation to address the most urgent and emerging needs of our nation's veterans and their families.

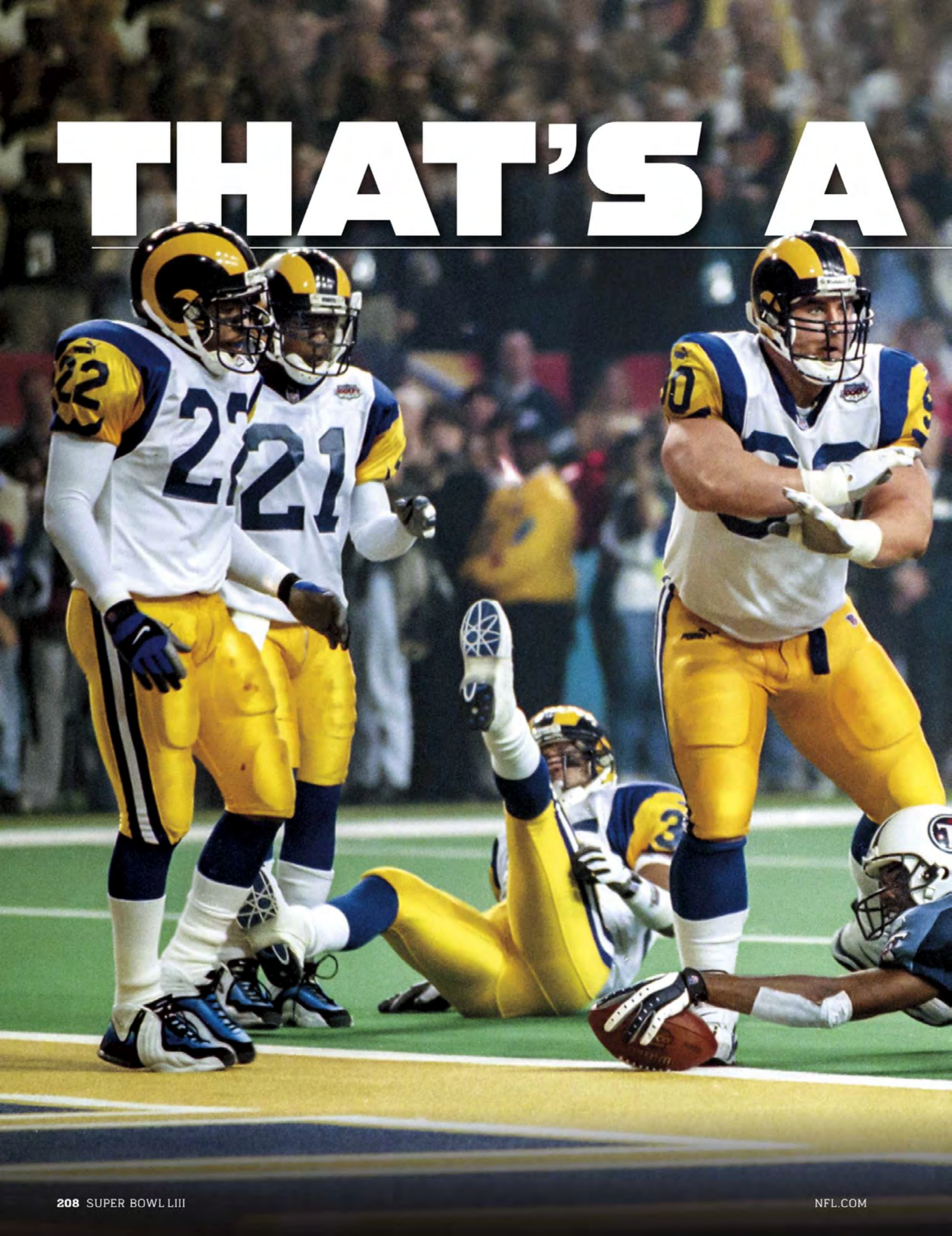
Connecting through the Shared Love of Football

The NFL brings service members and their families together through their shared love of football and provides opportunities for those serving to connect with one another.

For more than 50 years, the NFL has supported the USO and its mission to strengthen service members by keeping them connected to family, home, and country. Since 2007, NFL players and coaches have traveled on USO tours to 25 countries to meet and thank more than 95,000 service members.

For more information on these programs, please visit **nfl.com/salute.**

THAT'S A



WRAP

MIKE JONES' GOAL LINE TACKLE IN SUPER BOWL XXXIV SAVED THE RAMS A CHAMPIONSHIP AND REMAINS ONE OF THE GAME'S SIGNATURE DEFENSIVE MOMENTS.

BY ALEX MARVEZ

John Biever/Getty Images

MIKE JONES ADMITS to losing track of how many times he has told the story.

"It's been a lot," Jones says with a laugh. "It never gets old."

Nor should it – unless you're a Tennessee Titans fan.

There were memorable defensive moments in championship games before Super Bowl XXXIV, ranging from a pair of Raiders – cornerback Willie Brown (XI) and linebacker Jack Squirek (XVIII) – returning interceptions for key touchdowns to San Francisco's fourth-quarter goal line stand against Cincinnati in Super Bowl XVI.

And there have been multiple ones since, like Pittsburgh linebacker James Harrison (XLIII) and New Orleans cornerback Tracy Porter (XLIV) going to the house with passes they picked off, and cornerback Malcolm Butler helping New England escape Seattle in Super Bowl XLIX with his game-clinching interception.

But there has still never been a play quite like "The Tackle."

Without it, the Cinderella season enjoyed by quarterback Kurt Warner and his St. Louis Rams would have ended with a shattered glass slipper instead of a nice shiny Lombardi Trophy. An offense known as "The Greatest Show on Turf" would be best remembered for being cancelled during the 1999 playoffs. And Jones would be considered a goat for failing to make what is instead cemented as a GOAT (greatest of all time) stop that's been regularly revisited during the hype surrounding the Super Bowl's return to Atlanta 19 years later.

"We had the No. 1 offense, but our defense knew that, sooner or later, we would have to play well and win some games for our team,"

Jones says. "We didn't play well against Minnesota in the second round of the playoffs (a 49-37 Rams win), but the offense carried us. The offense struggled against Tampa Bay in the NFC title game, but our defense carried us.

"And in the Super Bowl, we shut out Tennessee in the first half and then scored just enough in the second half to beat them. That was a total team effort."

It also was an example of Jones "doing his job" 15 years before Bill Belichick popularized the phrase for the 2014 Patriots. New England's motto was exemplified by perfect technique from an undrafted rookie cornerback (Butler), who made the right read under extreme pressure when Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson tried to connect with Ricardo Lockette at the goal line.

Similar to Butler, Jones made it to the NFL the hard way: as a college free agent. Having spent his first six seasons with the Raiders after playing at the University of Missouri, Jones returned to the "Show Me State" as a Rams free-agent signing in 1997. At 6-foot-1 and 240 pounds, he didn't possess the same caliber of athleticism as some of his peers, but he stuck in the league because of his ability to read offenses and execute plays in a textbook-like fashion. "The Tackle" was a reflection of that very skill.

What was trending toward a Rams blowout midway through the third quarter had become anything but over the final 15 minutes. Tennessee chipped away at a 16-0 deficit to tie the score, only to see St. Louis take the lead once again, 23-16, on a 73-yard scoring pass from Warner to Isaac Bruce with 1:54 remaining.

The onus then fell on the Rams' "D" to secure the win. But until the very last snap, it appeared the Super Bowl was destined for what would have been its first overtime. Over the course of nine plays (and a couple penalties), quarterback Steve McNair drove the Titans deep into Rams territory, reaching the 10-yard line when his Houdini-like escape on a third-down play ended with a 16-yard completion to wide receiver Kevin Dyson. Just six seconds remained on the clock.

Tennessee used its final timeout, and as McNair and Titans head coach Jeff Fisher decided on their play, Rams defensive coordinator John Bunting countered with a call familiar to Jones and his teammates.

"It was our red zone go-to defense: 77 Blast," Jones recalls. "We had a line stunt that was the blast call. We ran that defense the entire year – in fact, the entire four years that I was there – as our bread and butter.

"The defense was basic in a sense, but it allowed us to make a coverage adjustment to whatever any team was giving us. We knew the Titans would wind up in a certain formation and this would be the best thing for us to play if we executed."

And for Jones, that meant making sure he made the right decision in coverage.

"For what we did, it put a lot of stress on the linebacker," he says. "You're lined up to work off what the wide receiver and tight end are doing, not the tight end and running back.

"They were hoping to get a one-on-one opportunity with a receiver and linebacker up the field. They got the matchup they wanted."

Unfortunately for the Titans, they didn't fool Jones in the process.

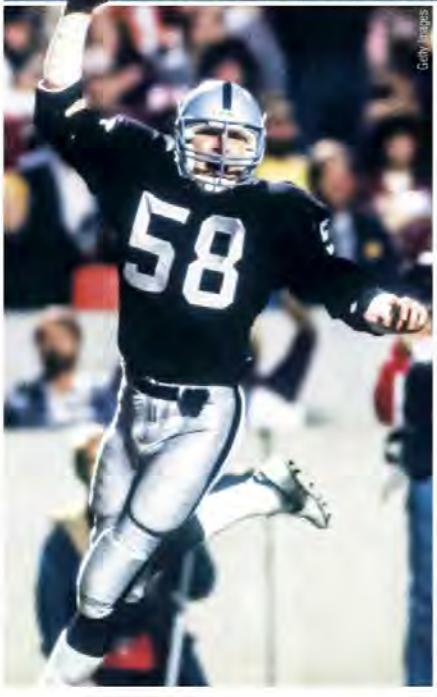
Tennessee was banking on Jones being tricked into following tight end Frank Wycheck in coverage. That would leave Dyson with more room to run after he broke inside on a slant route. Instead, Jones was already charging toward Dyson by the time McNair's pass hit his hands.

With his legs wrapped by Jones, Dyson reached toward the goal line with the football extended. A sold out Georgia Dome crowd of 72,625 fans fell into a hush waiting for the official to signal whether a touchdown was scored, but Jones says he "absolutely" knew that Dyson had been stopped short.

"In the red zone, the linebacker always has to know where they are and never drop deeper than the goal line," Jones explains. "Since the Titans were at our 10, I knew I could only take a couple steps back. I knew where I was on the field and the space I needed to make the play."

Rams wide receiver Torry Holt, who had

Kathy Willens/AP Images



Getty Images

Super Bowl history is steeped with clutch defensive plays. Two of the biggest are Malcolm Butler's goal line interception (above) that locked up the Patriots' victory vs. Seattle in Super Bowl XLIX, and Jack Squirek's pick-six (left) at the end of the first half of Super Bowl XVIII that paved the way for the Raiders' win over Washington.

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When Clay Matthews (52) forced a Steelers fumble in Super Bowl XLV, it put the Packers on a path to victory.

SIX MORE SUPER DEFENSIVE MOMENTS

End-of-game plays like those by the Rams' Mike Jones in Super Bowl XXXIV and the Patriots' Malcolm Butler in Super Bowl XLIX top the list of greatest defensive moments in Super Bowl history, but here are six more plays that happened earlier in games, yet had a huge impact on the outcome:

SUPER BOWL V

Leading 13-6 and receiving the third-quarter kickoff, Dallas quickly positioned itself for another score against the Colts. But on a 1st-and-goal at the 2-yard line, Cowboys running back Duane Thomas had the ball knocked from his hands by linebacker Mike Curtis just before reaching the end zone. Baltimore's Jim Duncan recovered the loose ball, preventing the Cowboys from taking a 14-point lead. Baltimore then rallied to victory with 10 fourth-quarter points.

SUPER BOWL XXI

Denver owned a 10-7 second-quarter lead on the Giants and was on the doorstep of another score with a 1st-and-goal from the 1-yard line. Over the next three plays, however, the "Big Blue Wrecking Crew" kept the Broncos at bay, capped by linebacker Carl Banks dragging down RB Sammy Winder for a four-yard loss. Denver kicker Rich Karlis then misfired on a 23-yard field goal, opening the door for the Giants to score the game's next 26 points on their way to a 39-20 victory.

SUPER BOWL XXVIII

The Bills' bid for a Super Bowl title looked to be finally coming to fruition as they led Dallas, 13-6, early in the second half and were on the march again. But Cowboys defensive tackle Leon Lett forced a Thurman Thomas fumble that safety James Washington scooped up and returned 46 yards for a momentum-shifting touchdown. Dallas took control from there, rolling to a 30-13 triumph.

SUPER BOWL XXXI

Two years after winning the Super Bowl thanks to Mike Jones' goal line tackle, the Rams were left scrambling after a big defensive play by the Patriots. St. Louis led, 3-0, in the second quarter and had the ball near midfield when defensive back Ty Law stepped in front of a Kurt Warner pass for an interception and darted 47 yards for a TD that gave New England the lead. The play set the tone for the underdog Patriots, who wouldn't surrender another point until the fourth quarter and then prevailed with a last-second field goal.

SUPER BOWL XLI

After the Bears kicked a field goal to narrow the Colts' fourth-quarter lead to 22-17, their defense forced a punt, giving Chicago's offense possession with a chance to move in front. QB Rex Grossman looked deep for Muhsin Muhammad, but defensive back Kelvin Hayden read the play brilliantly. He grabbed an interception that he returned 56 yards for a back-breaking TD, helping lift the Colts to their first Super Bowl title in 36 years.

SUPER BOWL XLV

Seeking its third Super Bowl title in six years, and what would have been its seventh overall, Pittsburgh was on the verge of overcoming a big deficit against Green Bay. The Steelers were within 21-17 and had the ball at the Packers 33 entering the fourth quarter. But on the next play, linebacker Clay Matthews jarred the ball loose from running back Rashard Mendenhall and recovered the fumble. Eight plays later, Green Bay scored an insurance touchdown and held on for the 31-25 win and its fourth Super Bowl crown.

caught a nine-yard TD pass from Warner in the third quarter, can still visualize how the play unfolded from the sideline.

"I remember being a little nervous, and all of us were standing in the same area watching it," Holt says. "Suddenly, everything slowed down. It was almost like we were commentating on the play live while watching it happen.

"Kevin catches the ball and, from my vantage point, I think he's going to be able to turn up and get into the end zone."

Holt then laughs.

"All of a sudden, I just see Mike's big arms grab hold of him and bring him down to the ground."

Holt said he immediately flashed back to something that had struck him about Jones earlier in the season.

"Mike was one of the first guys to work every morning," Holt says. "I was a rookie and it served as a reminder to always be a professional. I thought, 'There had to be something he saw on tape for him to give the quarterback the illusion that he could go to Dyson on that play and make it work.' Mike put himself in good enough position to come back to the play and make it."

Jones would play one more season with the Rams before finishing his NFL career with stops in Pittsburgh and Oakland. He retired after the 2002 season, entered the coaching ranks, and is currently running the football program at St. Louis University High School.

As celebrated as "The Tackle" remains, Jones says he doesn't use it as a teaching tool for his players.

"I don't bring up me playing too much," says Jones, who turns 50 in April. "It was a different time and a different era. Most of the kids I'm coaching now, their dad or mom know me as an NFL player, but they know me as 'Coach Jones.'"

Jones admits, though, "The Tackle" does resurface occasionally, thanks to internet replays.

"It's the same thing every year from my wide receivers," Jones says with a chuckle. "They tell me, 'If I was the guy coming across the middle, I would have scored.'"

Maybe so, but Dyson didn't.

"It comes down to one player making a play," former NFL quarterback Boomer Esiason said on ABC's Super Bowl XXXIV telecast.

"Mike Jones did that."

Alex Marvez has covered the NFL for 24 years as a national reporter and beat writer. A former Pro Football Writers of America president, Marvez currently serves as a host on SiriusXM NFL Radio.

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REMEMBERING PAUL ALLEN

(1953-2018)

INNOVATION, DRIVE, AND CIVIC DUTY WERE HALLMARKS OF THE SEAHAWKS OWNER'S STEWARDSHIP.

BY JOHN BOYLE

"At the end of the day, there was no Plan B … there was only Plan A, and Plan A was Paul Allen," remembers a Seattle-area politician.

Twenty-two years ago, moving vans were heading down Interstate Highway 5 as Seattle woke up to the reality that it was losing its professional football team. That was until Paul Allen stepped up and bought the team in 1997.

On Oct. 15, 2018, Allen, who owned the Seahawks for the past 21 years, died at the age of 65.

Allen was much more than the owner of the Seahawks and Portland Trail Blazers. He was a technology pioneer who co-founded Microsoft, then later launched Vulcan Inc., Stratolaunch Systems, the Allen Institute, and the Allen Institute for Artificial Intelligence. He was a philanthropist and conservationist who used his resources to make a difference in many ways around the world, giving more than $2 billion to causes near and dear to his heart; he enriched Seattle's art and music scene; he made amazing discoveries at the

bottoms of oceans to preserve and uncover history, and charted new territories in space; he rebuilt Seattle's South Lake Union neighborhood; and he did so much more to make the Seattle area, and the world, a better and more interesting place.

"All of the things that Paul did demonstrate to us what we all wish we would have done given the opportunity," Seahawks coach Pete Carroll says with admiration. "The extraordinary wealth that came [his] way because of the great ideas and the concepts and the principles opened up a doorway for him to give back to the place that he was so connected to. And he gave back in any way he could."

Allen's ownership had a profound impact on the organization. The pre-Allen Seahawks had some good seasons and built a strong following, but it was Allen's influence that allowed the Seahawks to become what they are today. It was Allen who brought Mike Holmgren to Seattle, launching what at the time was the most successful era in team history, one that culminated in Seattle's first Super Bowl appearance. And it was Allen who convinced Carroll to leave USC in 2010, then paired him with general manager John Schneider, starting an even more successful era, one that resulted in the Seahawks' first Super Bowl title.

"You couldn't ask for a better guy to support what we're trying to do here," Carroll says. "He didn't want you to hold back. He wanted to – at all times – be pushing ahead, and that's all we could ever hope for."

Since Allen bought the team in 1997, the Seahawks have been to the playoffs 12 times, won nine division titles, enjoyed eight seasons with 10 or more wins, and played in three Super Bowls, winning Super Bowl XLVIII following the 2013 season.

"He wanted to win championships," Carroll says. "That's what he was all about, and he wasn't going to let anything get in the way."

In his 2011 memoir *Idea Man*, Allen wrote, "If I entered the NBA out of passion, I was called to the National Football League out of civic duty."

The Seahawks became a passion project for Allen over time, and as someone who succeeded in so many other ventures, Allen refused to see his football team be anything but a winner.

"As an owner who was born and raised here, it's a very special moment and the fulfillment of a dream, not just for me, but for everyone on the team," Allen told the more than 700,000 fans (known as the 12s) at the parade celebrating the Seahawks' Super Bowl win.

To understand what compelled Allen to buy the Seahawks, you first need to understand his upbringing. Allen, who already owned the Trail Blazers, wasn't looking to buy an NFL team when he was first approached in 1996, but he and his sister, Jody, were raised by parents who instilled in their children the importance of giving back to the community.

"From the time that Paul and I were kids, we were raised in an environment where to have a healthy community means you participate in your community," Jody says. "And this was something that we were in a unique position to do."

"Paul inspired people to participate in their community and try to leave the world a better place. Without the team and the fans, Seattle wouldn't be as exciting as it is today."

—JODY ALLEN, SISTER OF PAUL ALLEN

So when local politicians came to Allen, he was on board.

"In the end, it wasn't a financial decision. It was a decision of commitment," says King County Councilmember Pete von Reichbauer. "This is an Allen family commitment to this community, because there was no financial reason for him to buy the team, and there was no personal reason for him to buy the team."

Once Allen bought the Seahawks, however, he infused his passion for technology and ensured the team had state-of-the-art facilities and the resources it needed to win.

When Allen turned to his sister to manage the construction of CenturyLink Field, they had the 12s in mind. Allen, who grew up going to University of Washington games at Husky Stadium, wanted to recreate the loud, raucous environment he remembered from his youth. So CenturyLink Field was built with a roof covering much of the stadium – not just to keep fans dry, but to trap noise and send it back down onto the field, making it the loudest stadium in the NFL. The construction of CenturyLink Field was also a crucial piece in the process of bringing Major League Soccer to Seattle; the Sounders joined the league in 2009 with Allen as a part owner. They quickly became one of the league's model franchises.

Allen also built a culture that produced not just wins, but a sense of belonging. Players and coaches, as well as people on the business side of the Seahawks, say the organization has a family-like atmosphere. That sense of community began with Allen, whether through his direct influence or through the people he put in place to execute his vision.

"The culture that he was able to create, that will forever live on here," says Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson. "Just the impact that he made, not just for us as individuals, as a team, but also as a city, and there's probably not too many people who have impacted the world more than he has."

It's almost impossible to be in the Pacific Northwest and not feel Allen's influence on the region, which is why the news of his death affected so many people.

"Paul inspired people to participate in their community and try to leave the world a better place," Jody says. "Without the team and the fans, Seattle wouldn't be as exciting as it is today."

Allen's legacy will be as vast as his interests, from life-altering technology to life-saving philanthropic acts, but for millions of Seahawks fans, he will forever be remembered as the man who saved professional football in Seattle, then carried the franchise to unparalleled success.

"What he saw was a chance to bring the community closer together," says Steve Raible, a former Seahawks receiver who is now the team's play-by-play radio announcer. "If you go to CenturyLink Field [on game day], you'll see that. You'll see that diversity. You'll see that community. You'll see it from the 70-year-old who watched us back in the day to their grandkids who are with them every Sunday.

"That's what he built here. That's why it's so special."

***John Boyle** is the digital media reporter for seahawks.com.*

REMEMBERING TOM BENSON

THE SAINTS OWNER BREATHED LIFE BACK INTO NEW ORLEANS AND DELIVERED A SUPER BOWL TITLE. *BY HERBIE TEOPE*

(1927-2018)

On March 15, 2018, New Orleans paid tribute to Tom Benson as only it could.

Within hours of his passing, downtown residents took to the streets with an impromptu second-line celebration to honor one of their own. The crowd grew as the parade made its way to the Mercedes-Benz Superdome before ending, fittingly enough, in front of Benson's 14-foot bronze statue.

Benson passed away at the age of 90 a beloved figure, but the former Saints owner is far from forgotten. Nearly a year after his death, members of Benson's tight inner circle continue to mourn a New Orleans icon, a man they affectionately referred to as "Mr. B."

"All of us have people in our lives who make a difference for us," Saints general manager Mickey Loomis says. "Usually, there are a lot of those people, but he gave me this opportunity, No. 1. That in and of itself is something you can't ever repay."

Loomis, who joined the Saints' front office in 2000, learned early on what Benson expected of those under his charge.

"Believe in decision-making, loyalty, and other qualities I think that we pay a lot of lip service to, but were really important to him," he says. "Are you good for your word? Are you willing to deliver bad news just as quickly as you are good news? What that said to me was, man, this guy has a quality that a lot of owners don't have – patience and understanding."

Team president Dennis Lauscha has been with the Saints for a long time, too. He came aboard in 1998 as a 28-year-old treasurer before assuming his current title in 2012.

John David Mercer/USA TODAY Sports

"We miss the hell out of him," Lauscha says with a sigh. "We miss him coming through, walking by a door, hearing him yell every day, 'Hey, Dennis! I'm here!'"

Thomas Milton Benson Jr. was born July 12, 1927, and his journey to self-made billionaire and owner of two professional teams began with humble roots.

The oldest of four brothers, Benson grew up in the working-class neighborhood of New Orleans' 7th Ward, attended Brother Martin High School, and upon graduation enrolled at Loyola. Duty called, however, and Benson raised his right hand to enlist in the U.S. Navy during World War II, serving on the battleship USS South Dakota in the South Pacific.

He married his first wife, Shirley Landry, while still in the Navy, and then used the GI Bill in 1947 to re-enroll at Loyola with a major in accounting. But Benson didn't last long in college, leaving to accept a job as a bookkeeper at a New Orleans car dealership.

He soon caught the eye of San Antonio vehicle retailer Mike Persia, who had expanded into the New Orleans market. Persia owned a Chevrolet dealership in San Antonio and asked Benson to run it with a 25 percent stake as owner. The move catapulted Benson's career, and through determination and hard work, the young businessman established the Tom Benson Chevrolet Company.

"He grew up poor and didn't have a lot," Loomis says. "He had a great work ethic. That generation that he came from, they had to grind and work hard to get or achieve anything."

Benson returned to New Orleans in 1978 a wealthy man, and by the middle of the 1980s, he was an established majority stockholder in six banks and owned 23 vehicle dealerships. He purchased the Saints in 1985 and the NBA's Pelicans in 2012.

"He was just the epitome of a good, honest businessman," Benson's widow and wife of 14 years, Gayle, says with a warm smile. "He wanted to do everything the right way."

Benson overcame well-documented tragedies in his life. He buried two wives, two children, and dealt with a bitter public dispute in 2015 over the rights to team ownership, which passed to Gayle.

Throughout the adversity, however, Benson persevered and never forgot where he came from. And over the years, he and Gayle made substantial donations to the local community, including a $10 million endowment to his high school alma mater.

Benson also enjoyed taking on reclamation projects and helping local businesses. He bought the dilapidated Dominion Towers; the refurnished downtown building now bears his name. He and Gayle purchased a majority share in the Dixie Brewing Company in 2017 and brought the brewery back to New Orleans. Benson also stepped in to purchase FOX 8 News when the TV station gained interest from outside buyers in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

"If he heard a local business was failing, he'd want to come in and buy it and save it," Gayle says. "Dixie Beer was a perfect example. He'd just gravitate to whatever was struggling because he wanted to keep it in the city."

"That generation [Mr. Benson] came from, they had to grind and work hard to get or achieve anything."

—SAINTS GM MICKEY LOOMIS

Another area that Benson savored was his time in uniform, a period he held close to his heart throughout his life.

"He had a sincere love for the military," Lauscha says. "What he did in the Navy and supporting a lot of the efforts in Pensacola (Florida) – there's a Naval Air Station and a museum there – he gave a lot of money."

That love of the military extended beyond the public eye. During a visit to West Point in 2005, Benson, a devout Catholic, attended mass at the academy's chapel and noticed it was hot. He was told there was no internal cooling system for the building, so Benson quickly helped solve the problem.

"He wrote a check to put air conditioning in the chapel," Lauscha says.

Hurricane Katrina had devastating effects in New Orleans, forcing the Saints to temporarily relocate to San Antonio in 2005 while the Superdome underwent repairs. Speculation quickly mounted that the Saints would leave New Orleans altogether.

Loomis understood the uncertainty given the circumstances, but emphatically says that Benson was never going to uproot the team.

"He was always coming back to New Orleans," Loomis explains. "He loved the city too much to think otherwise."

With the team staying put, the city went about rebuilding and the Saints began assembling something special with the arrivals of coach Sean Payton and QB Drew Brees. Four years removed from Katrina, Benson's Saints delivered a championship, beating the Colts, 31-17, in Super Bowl XLIV.

"He was so happy after the game and we were all singing 'We Are the Champions' (on the team bus), and he was singing it, too," Lauscha says with a chuckle. "That was a special moment for him."

Benson made a mark in the NFL with the Pro Football Hall of Fame and as chairman of the league's Finance Committee.

With Gayle's support and encouragement, Benson made a generous $11 million donation to the Hall of Fame to renovate what is now called Tom Benson Hall of Fame Stadium.

"When we got the call to help develop the Hall of Fame, I felt like it was very important for his legacy," Gayle says.

Benson's work with the Finance Committee helped spearhead the league's commercial and financial growth over the past quarter-century. As committee chairman, he played a big role in developing the model allowing teams to partner with their home cities to have new stadiums built.

"The principles that guide our league now, a lot of them were born on the Finance Committee," Loomis says. "The integrity of our league, the stability of our league, those were important pillars for him."

Gayle Benson knows the city of New Orleans will always be grateful to the man who helped shape it for continued success.

"Everybody I talk to, everybody who comes up to me, tells me New Orleans would not be what it is without Tom Benson," she says. "He never believed that.

"But when you stop and look around, they're right. He did make this city what it is today."

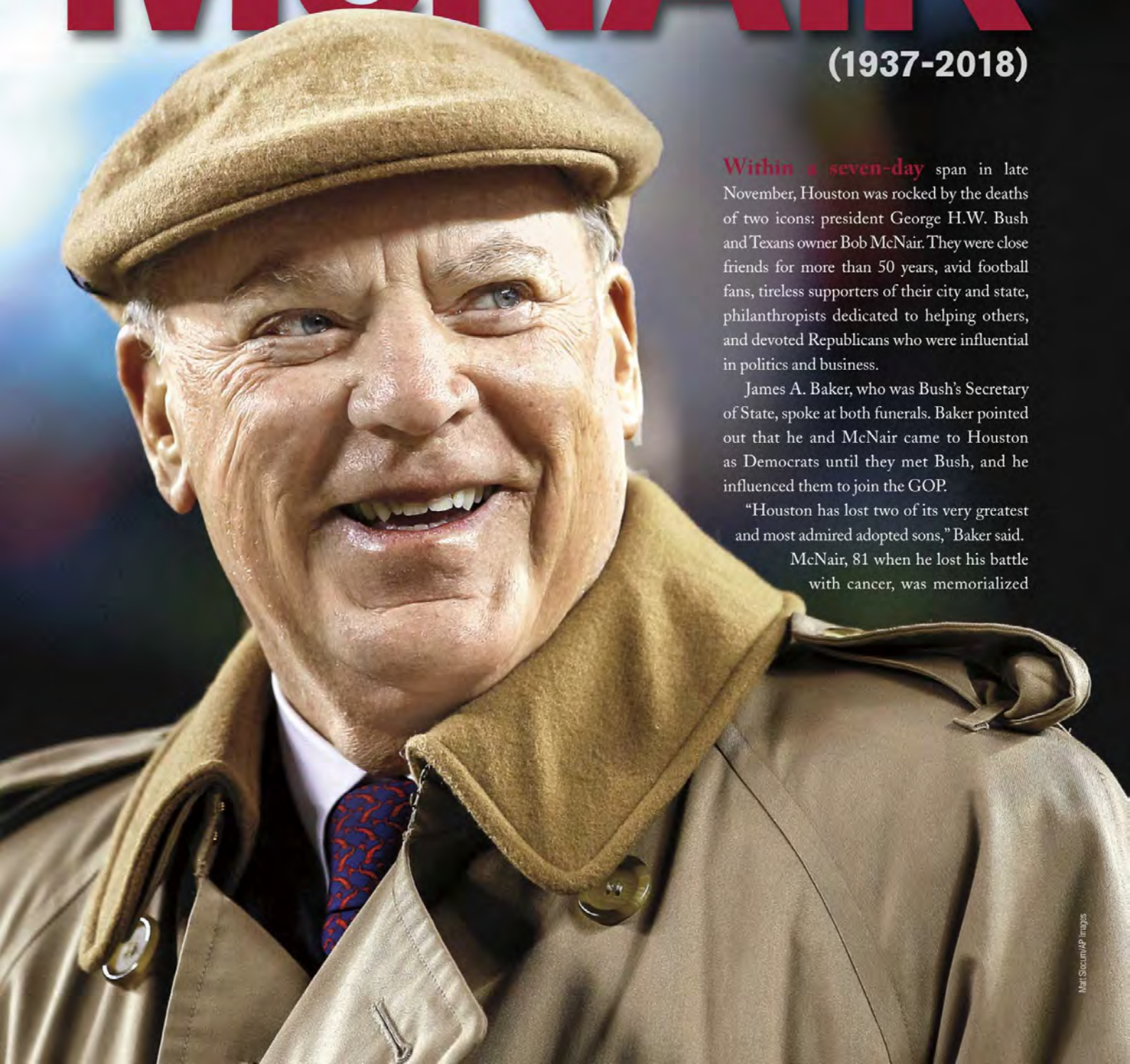
***Herbie Teope** is a New Orleans–based staff writer for nfl.com. He previously covered the Saints for the* Times-Picayune *and the Kansas City Chiefs for the* Topeka Capital-Journal.

REMEMBERING BOB McNAIR

GRACIOUS AND GOOD-HEARTED, HE BROUGHT PRO FOOTBALL BACK TO HIS ADOPTED HOMETOWN OF HOUSTON.

BY JOHN McCLAIN

(1937-2018)



Matt Slocum/AP Images

Within a seven-day span in late November, Houston was rocked by the deaths of two icons: president George H.W. Bush and Texans owner Bob McNair. They were close friends for more than 50 years, avid football fans, tireless supporters of their city and state, philanthropists dedicated to helping others, and devoted Republicans who were influential in politics and business.

James A. Baker, who was Bush's Secretary of State, spoke at both funerals. Baker pointed out that he and McNair came to Houston as Democrats until they met Bush, and he influenced them to join the GOP.

"Houston has lost two of its very greatest and most admired adopted sons," Baker said.

McNair, 81 when he lost his battle with cancer, was memorialized

at NRG Stadium, home of the Texans. Baker called it, "The house that Bob McNair built."

McNair, a humble, soft-spoken southern gentleman who grew up in North Carolina and came to Houston in 1960, would have been embarrassed at the attention. He preferred to remain in the background with his wife, Janice, and let his coaches and players receive the recognition.

If not for McNair, however, Houston wouldn't have been awarded an NFL expansion team in 1999. His pursuit of a franchise received a lot of attention – the kind that he was always uncomfortable with – but he was devoted to Houston and the fans who mourned the loss of the Oilers, the city's first NFL team.

"I'm a homer for Houston," McNair used to say.

McNair paid a $700 million expansion fee and contributed $100 million to the construction of what was then Reliant Stadium. He had the backing of the political and business community and the support of NFL owners.

"Bob was so special," said Dallas owner Jerry Jones, who also attended the service. "I was excited for Houston to get an NFL franchise, and I was particularly excited when I saw the character of the person who was going to lead the way in Bob. He'll be missed. He was an inspiration. He loved his players and was always so supportive of the NFL, the players, and what we could do to make it good for the players."

Jones is also part of Texans history. The team's first victory came over the Cowboys in a nationally televised prime-time game at Reliant Stadium.

"The Texans and Bob kicked our butts in the first game that was played in this stadium," Jones said. "It was a glorious night to begin the Texans."

Janice McNair becomes the team's controlling owner. Cal McNair, one of two sons and four children, will run the franchise as the chairman. He has been his father's right-hand man since 2000, and those who know him best believe he'll run the team as his father did.

One of McNair's last major decisions before the recurrence of his cancer was to hire general manager Brian Gaine and extend the contract of coach Bill O'Brien for four years.

"He meant so much to me and my family," says O'Brien, the Texans' coach for the last five years. "Bob gave me a chance to be a head football coach in the NFL. He trusted in me, and I owe a lot to him.

"I learned a lot from Bob about leadership, about the type of organization he wanted here, the respect he had for everybody in the organization, and the love he had for the city of Houston. To be able to celebrate his life was an honor."

McNair loved sports, and football was his first love. That passion for football led him to pursue an NFL franchise long before Bud Adams, the late Oilers owner, moved his team to Nashville.

McNair and Adams were friends and neighbors. Adams came to Houston following World War II; McNair brought his family there a decade later, shortly after graduating from the University of South Carolina.

On a scouting mission to the Bayou City, McNair saw horses and covered wagons on Main Street. He was so shocked that he called Janice and told her perhaps they were making a mistake moving to Houston. Yet he soon found out the horses and wagons signaled the start of the annual Fat Stock Show that, in 1961, would be renamed the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo.

McNair wasn't shy about starting businesses, even if they weren't all successful. He used his last $700 to open a car-rental company that later included truck rentals. He failed in a telecommunications venture and later went bankrupt – but eventually paid all his debts.

In the 1980s, McNair began to prosper financially. He founded Cogen Technologies, a privately held company that supplied electricity to the northeast. As his business grew, McNair started to become one of Houston's most respected and generous benefactors.

"What's the use in making money if you can't use it to help others?" said McNair, whose family is estimated to have given away more than $500 million at the time of his death.

McNair also was a serious Oilers fan who became a season-ticket holder as soon as he could afford it, and within a few years was in a position to fulfill his dream of owning an NFL team.

In 1993, Adams introduced McNair to NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue. After the league vetted McNair, he was approached about his interest in some franchises that became available, including Miami and Washington. But McNair was waiting and hoping for just the right deal – in Houston, which would lose its team when Adams couldn't get financing for a new stadium and relocated the Oilers.

When the NFL announced its next round of expansion in 1999, it wanted to award a franchise to Los Angeles, and gave the city an exclusive negotiating period to finalize a deal. McNair was asked if he wanted to own the team, but declined because he was confident his finances and stadium plan would be enough to convince the league to return to Houston.

"I learned a lot from Bob about leadership, about the type of organization he wanted here, the respect he had for everybody in the organization, and the love he had for Houston."

—TEXANS COACH BILL O'BRIEN

He was right; the city got its new team at a league meeting that year in Atlanta.

"One of the happiest days of my life," McNair said.

McNair loved Texas. He wanted his team to be named the Texans, and he always knew his team colors would be red, white, and blue.

Houston fans appreciated McNair for bringing the NFL back to town and also for getting Super Bowl XXXVIII in 2004 and Super Bowl LI in 2017 for NRG Stadium.

"It's a privilege to be an NFL owner," McNair said many times.

The respect and influence McNair enjoyed was widely seen. He advised Tagliabue and current commissioner Roger Goodell on league matters and once served on five committees. He chaired the Finance Committee until being forced to wage another battle with cancer.

This time, he couldn't beat it, and Houston lost a favorite son who championed the city for almost 60 years and can never be replaced.

***John McClain** has been covering the NFL for the* Houston Chronicle *for 40 years and was the 2006 recipient of the Dick McCann Memorial Award.*

REMEMBERING ALEX SPANOS

(1923-2018)

CHARGERS OWNER WAS THE EMBODIMENT OF AMERICA'S "GREATEST GENERATION."

BY JIM GRAY

Inscribed on the tombstone of the great Jackie Robinson is one of his most enduring quotes: "A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives."

It's a good place to start because Alex Spanos' life had a tremendous impact.

If you met him, you wanted to spend more time with him. And if you spent time with Alex, you never forgot him. The Chargers owner passed away Oct. 9, less than two weeks after his 95th birthday, yet the impact he had lives on and reverberates in his family, his friends, his community, his team, his league, his state, and our country.

So often we hear the cliché – particularly after tragedy – that "this puts everything in perspective." Alex needed no life-changing events to always have his priorities in order. His family, and the love and joy he had for them, was always first and foremost.

Many years ago, Raiders owner Al Davis introduced me to Alex when he was completing his purchase of the Chargers. I was in Al's office, and Alex was there for a meeting. He told Mr. Davis that I should leave. Al dismissed the notion, saying not to worry about me; I was with him.

"He can hear whatever you have to say," Mr. Davis said.

Alex pointed out that I was a reporter, and Al said yes, but so what? "You can trust him."

And that was all Alex had to hear. From that moment, we grew to become dear friends.

In the late 1980s, the three of us had dinner in Los Angeles. Al asked me a question, "What do you want in life?" I didn't know what he meant, so Al said there are only five things: money, power, fame, glory, or love. "Which one do you want?"

I said that I would have to think about it. He told me I'd better hurry up and decide, otherwise I'd end up with none of them.

I asked Al which one it was for him. He said, "That's easy, power. If I had power, I'd be famous. I would've probably done something glorious, and with power comes money. And love, ah, [expletive] love."

Al then turned to Alex and asked what it was for him. Alex immediately said love. "I love my wife, my family, my business, my team, my community. So for me, it's definitely love."

Al looked at him squarely in the eye and said, "If that's the case, for what you want to achieve, and for what you're trying to accomplish in life, you then have more championships than I do."

Alex was so touched and moved that he began to cry.

You see, Alex Spanos won in the game of life. "Life," he would often tell me, "is what you give."

Alex gave so much of himself, to so many. He gave of his time and good fortune – for good – to be used by future generations.

Alex was an inclusive man, living in a very exclusive world. I got to experience this firsthand when I was in Colorado covering President Gerald Ford's golf tournament. I saw Alex, and he asked if I would like a ride back to California on his plane. When I got on the plane, Bob Hope was already on board. Alex was giving him a lift to Palm Springs. My jaw dropped.

After the plane landed in that desert oasis, there was a mechanical problem. It would need to be resolved before we left for Los Angeles and might take a couple hours. Mr. Hope suggested we go to his house. Alex didn't say, "Stay here," or, "Go find something to do." He took me along.

After a couple of hours passed, we were told we couldn't leave until morning. Mr. Hope turned to his wife, Dolores, and said, "It looks like we have a couple visitors staying with us tonight."

Alex could have said, "Kid, go get a hotel." But he didn't. He was treating me as an equal – like I belonged with him in his world, even though I clearly didn't.

The next morning, Mr. Hope said it was time to go back to the airport. I thought we were going to get on the plane and head home. Nope. We picked up Alex's golf clubs and went to the course. When we got to the clubhouse, President Ford was there waiting for us. Unbelievable.

Throughout the round, Bob Hope was firing off one-liners. The President was famous, or infamous, for hitting people with his golf ball on the course. It was a fairly regular occurrence. On the first tee, Hope said whenever he played with President Ford, he tried to make it a foursome – the President, himself, a paramedic, and a priest. He was just getting going.

He then told Alex that while he may have been in World War II, you don't know what fear is until you hear the President behind you shouting "fore." Doubling down, he told President Ford that he thought it was time to take some lessons. Not golf lessons. First aid.

Alex gave so much of himself, to so many. He gave of his time and good fortune – for good – to be used by future generations.

The comedian was on a roll, saying to Alex, "I know you love football, so you may need a helmet today. President Ford has made golf a contact sport."

The jokes and laughter of that afternoon, however, belied another side of Alex on the golf course. He was demanding, and he wanted things done right. Since he earned everything in life, he expected that same level of hard work and dedication from others.

This also applied to me, his unsuspecting golf partner. After I missed a couple putts on the first few holes, he came back to the cart and said, "Son, you need to pay attention. We're trying to win today. You think I want to be the butt of all these jokes? The only way to keep him quiet is to win."

In an instant, I went from enamored, laughing, and amazed to nervous and anxious.

We got to the last hole, won the match, and each took home $25. Alex was so happy, and I was so relieved. It was a wonderful experience, and one I will never forget.

The reason it is so indelible? It was the way I was treated. Every time I was with Alex Spanos, I felt better about him and better about myself. How many people can you say that about?

I was working with General Norman Schwarzkopf during the 1994 Winter Olympics in Lillehammer, Norway. Alex took notice and, being a World War II veteran and great admirer of the military, he wanted to get in touch with the General. He had read the General's book and was enamored with what he had written in it. They connected and discussed the notion from the book that leadership is a potent combination of strategy and character. "But if you must be without one," said the General," be without the strategy."

Alex told me that defined to him what was most important in business and in life: character.

In 1995, the Chargers made their first Super Bowl appearance and I saw Alex before the game. He was very hopeful his Chargers would knock off the 49ers, but unfortunately they lost that day in Miami. I didn't see him again until a couple of months after the game at the league meetings. We walked off to the side, and he told me how disappointed he was.

But then the conversation turned, and he asked me if I had remembered our dinner a decade ago? I told him yes, and he restated that love was his goal. He said despite the disappointment of the loss, all of his loves were still in place – and even stronger.

All those years later, he said Al was right. "Love is what's important to me in my life."

He knew it. It wasn't glory, or fame, or power, or money. It was love, family, character, loyalty, and caring – the hallmarks that made Alex Spanos a champion.

Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote, "When nature removes a great man, people explore the horizon for a successor; but none comes, and none will. For his class is extinguished with him."

Alex Spanos was in a class all of his own.

__Jim Gray__ is a 12-time Emmy Award-winning sportscaster who has covered the NFL for four decades and is currently with FOX, Showtime, and Westwood One.

THE CHIEFS TAKE CHARGE

Unleashing an offense operating at a record pace, Kansas City emerged as the biggest story of the early season.

A big reason that the Chiefs (4-0) stood as one of the league's two undefeated teams was the play of Patrick Mahomes. The second-year quarterback set an NFL mark with 13 touchdown passes in the season's first three games, then showed a flair for the dramatic in a come-from-behind win over AFC West rival Denver in Week 4.

It didn't take long for Kansas City to show its explosiveness. In the first quarter of a 38-28 Kickoff Weekend victory over the Chargers, Tyreek Hill became just the third player in history with a 50+ yard TD catch and a 90+ yard punt-return TD in the same game. He opened the scoring by bringing back a punt 91 yards and soon after caught a 58-yard pass to give his team a 14-3 lead.

Week 2 saw Mahomes fire six touchdown passes, two to tight end Travis Kelce, in a 42-37 shootout at Pittsburgh, then add 314 passing yards and three more TDs in a 38-27 decision over the 49ers. As a result, the Chiefs became the third team to score at least 38 points in each of their first three games, matching the 2007 Patriots and the 1967 Baltimore Colts.

Kansas City went a different route in Week 4, rallying from a late 10-point deficit to edge the Broncos, 27-23. Highlighting the game-winning drive was Mahomes escaping a sack by Von Miller and then switching the ball into his left hand before throwing a completion to convert a crucial third-and-five.

"He's actually more athletic than people realize," Denver linebacker Brandon Marshall said. "People talk about his arm, but he can move out of the pocket and make the necessary throws."

▶ **MIGHTY MAHOMES:** Patrick Mahomes threw 14 touchdown passes without an interception during Kansas City's 4-0 start to the season.

Don Wright/AP Images

2018 NFL STANDINGS – THROUGH WEEK 4

AFC EAST	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Miami	3-1-0	.750	82	90
New England	2-2-0	.500	95	84
Buffalo	1-3-0	.250	50	106
N.Y. Jets	1-3-0	.250	89	89

AFC NORTH	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Cincinnati	3-1-0	.750	126	113
Baltimore	3-1-0	.750	123	65
Cleveland	1-2-1	.375	102	104
Pittsburgh	1-2-1	.375	102	116

AFC SOUTH	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Tennessee	3-1-0	.750	75	73
Jacksonville	3-1-0	.750	88	56
Houston	1-3-0	.250	96	108
Indianapolis	1-3-0	.250	94	100

AFC WEST	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Kansas City	4-0-0	1.000	145	115
Denver	2-2-0	.500	84	97
L.A. Chargers	2-2-0	.500	111	120
Oakland	1-3-0	.250	97	123

NFC EAST	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Washington	2-1-0	.667	64	44
Dallas	2-2-0	.500	67	77
Philadelphia	2-2-0	.500	82	81
N.Y. Giants	1-3-0	.250	73	95

NFC NORTH	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Chicago	3-1-0	.750	111	65
Green Bay	2-1-1	.625	92	83
Minnesota	1-2-1	.375	90	110
Detroit	1-3-0	.250	94	114

NFC SOUTH	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
New Orleans	3-1-0	.750	137	121
Carolina	2-1-0	.667	71	60
Tampa Bay	2-2-0	.500	112	139
Atlanta	1-3-0	.250	116	122

NFC WEST	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
L.A. Rams	4-0-0	1.000	140	67
Seattle	2-2-0	.500	85	81
San Francisco	1-3-0	.250	100	118
Arizona	0-4-0	.000	37	94

David Richard/AP Images

PRESSURE POINT: Browns defensive end Myles Garrett had 4.5 sacks through four games.

Butch Dill/AP Images

TOP TARGET: Michael Thomas' 42 receptions led the NFL through four weeks.

Brian Kersey/Getty Images

RINGS ON WINGS: The Eagles' mascot shows off his Super Bowl LII championship ring prior to the team's season-opening victory over the Falcons.

The win at Denver also answered a question that Kansas City had yet to face during its fast start.

"We had leads in those first three games, but everyone asked us about being behind and how the team and how Patrick were going to react," Chiefs coach Andy Reid said. "We got a taste of that."

Only one other undefeated team remained in the league: the 4-0 Los Angeles Rams, who were riding the play of touchdown machine Todd Gurley. The fourth-year running back scored six times in the Rams' first four games – four rushing and two receiving.

WEEK 1

Lifted by a third-quarter TD outburst – with scores via a pass, run, interception return, and punt return – the Jets rolled to a 48-17 Monday night victory over the Lions. Sam Darnold, who at age 21 became the youngest quarterback to start a season opener since the 1970 AFL-NFL merger, overcame a pick-six on his first pass attempt to throw for 198 yards and two touchdowns in the win. One of those TDs was a 21-yard strike to Quincy Enunwa that broke a 17-17 tie with 9:36 to go in the third quarter. A minute later, linebacker Darron Lee intercepted a pass that he brought back 36 yards for another New York score. The Jets' defense then forced a three-and-out, and Andre Roberts returned the ensuing punt 78 yards along the left sideline for a touchdown. That was followed by Jason Myers' 32-yard field goal and Isaiah Crowell's 62-yard touchdown run to complete a 31-point scoring spree that took just 8:42 off the clock. "We wanted to make sure we came out and made a statement in this game," said Lee, who had two of the Jets' five interceptions and added seven tackles.

▸ **First Takes:** After unfurling their Super Bowl LII championship banner during a pregame ceremony, the Eagles went out and edged the Falcons, 18-12, behind two Jay Ajayi touchdown runs and a defense that stopped the visitors on downs at the 5-yard line as time expired … Ryan Fitzpatrick threw for 417 yards and four TDs, and also ran for a touchdown, as the Buccaneers upended the Saints, 48-40, in the highest-scoring Kickoff Weekend game in NFL history … Joe Flacco threw for three touchdowns, Tavon Young had two of his team's six sacks, and Brandon Carr and Tony Jefferson intercepted passes as the Ravens overpowered the Bills, 47-3 … Todd Gurley rushed for 108 yards and caught a 19-yard touchdown pass to pace the Rams' 33-13 win at Oakland.

NEXT GEN GEM

Myles Garrett recorded the fastest sack of Week 1. The Browns' defensive end needed just 1.97 seconds to bring down Steelers QB Ben Roethlisberger during the 21-21 tie between the teams.

WEEK 2

A rematch of the 2017 AFC Championship Game went to the Jaguars, who saw Blake Bortles fire four touchdowns passes in a 31-20 victory over the Patriots. Bortles finished with 376 passing yards and tossed first-half scoring strikes to Donte Moncrief, Keelan Cole, and Austin Seferian-Jenkins as his team built a 21-3 lead. Jacksonville also received a big defensive play from defensive end Dante Fowler. With New England facing a third-and-nine at the Jaguars 24 and threatening to make it a one-score game, Fowler stripped QB Tom Brady of the ball and recovered the fumble. Less than five minutes later, Bortles hit Dede Westbrook on a 61-yard TD throw to extend the margin to 31-13. "Every week is about us," said Jaguars cornerback Jalen Ramsey, after the team's first win over the Patriots since the 1998 postseason. "We feel like if we're at the top of our game, we can't be beat."

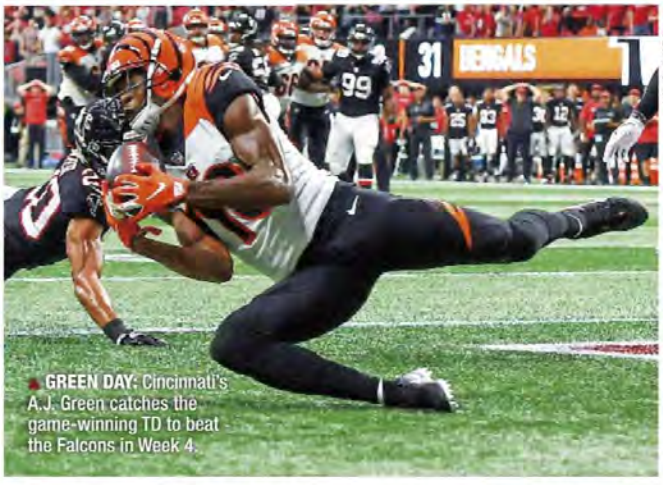
▸ **Second Looks:** Kevin Byard threw a 66-yard scoring pass to Dane Cruikshank on a fake punt, the longest TD pass by a defensive player in the Super Bowl era, as Tennessee edged Houston, 20-17 … Frank Gore went over 14,000 career rushing yards and moved into fourth place on the NFL's all-time rushing list (14,112) in the Dolphins' 20-12 win over

Mark J. Terrill/AP Images

▲ **RAM TOUGH:** Todd Gurley was again proving to be a dangerous double threat out of the L.A. Rams' backfield.

Jae C. Hong/AP Images

▶ **FLASHES OF BRILLIANCE:** Chargers coach Anthony Lynn saw his team score early-season wins over the Bills and 49ers.



John Amis/AP Images

▲ **GREEN DAY:** Cincinnati's A.J. Green catches the game-winning TD to beat the Falcons in Week 4.

the Jets … Ryan Fitzpatrick had a pair of 75-yard touchdown passes – to DeSean Jackson and O.J. Howard – to spark the Buccaneers' 27-21 victory over the Eagles … Phillip Lindsay rushed for 107 yards and Brandon McManus kicked a 36-yard field goal with six seconds remaining to cap a fourth-quarter rally that lifted Denver to a 20-19 victory over the Raiders … Dak Prescott connected with Tavon Austin for a 64-yard TD on the game's fourth play, spurring the Cowboys past the Giants, 20-13.

NEXT GEN GEM

Buffalo's 27-6 win over the Vikings was aided by its fierce pass rush, which registered a Week 3-best 29 pressures and four sacks.

WEEK 3

Paced by Jared Goff's 354 passing yards and three TDs, the Rams stayed unbeaten with a 35-23 win over the Chargers in the first NFL game between two LA-based teams in 27 seasons. Todd Gurley rushed for 105 yards and opened the scoring with a one-yard run, and the Rams later pushed their lead to 21-6 on a blocked punt that Blake Countess recovered in the end zone for a touchdown. Robert Woods caught two of Goff's TD passes and Cooper Kupp added a 53-yard scoring grab for the Rams, who totaled 521 yards of offense on the day. "It felt like a good rivalry," said Goff of the game at the Coliseum. "You could feel the crowd. You could tell there were two sides in here. Ultimately, I think we had a little bit more, being at home, but you could definitely feel it. I think they are a great team, we're a great team, and hopefully that can continue for a long time."

▶ **Three Deep:** Drew Brees became the NFL's all-time completions leader during the Saints' 43-37 overtime win at Atlanta. Brees (39 of 49, 396 yards, 3 TDs), whose 6,326 career completions moved him past Brett Favre, also ran for two touchdowns, including a one-yard plunge for the victory … The Dolphins' Albert Wilson became the first player in 17 years to have both a touchdown pass and a touchdown catch of at least 50 yards in the same game, helping his team capture a 28-20 win over Oakland … No. 1 overall pick Baker Mayfield had a memorable debut for the Browns, completing 17 of 23 passes for 201 yards and a 100.1 QB rating in a 21-17 victory over the Jets … Cam Newton threw for a pair of touchdowns and rushed for two others as the Panthers battled past the Bengals, 31-21.

WEEK 4

The Bears rolled to their third straight victory by beating the Buccaneers, 48-10, thanks to a huge effort from second-year QB Mitchell Trubisky and a relentless defense. Trubisky (19 of 26, 354 yards) threw six TD passes while directing an offense that racked up 483 total yards, just five shy of the franchise record. Five different players caught the touchdowns,

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SCORES & AWARDS

WEEK 1 / September 6-10

PHILADELPHIA 18, Atlanta 12
MIAMI 27, Tennessee 20
MINNESOTA 24, San Francisco 16
NEW ENGLAND 27, Houston 20
Tampa Bay 48, NEW ORLEANS 40
Jacksonville 20, NY GIANTS 15
Cincinnati 34, INDIANAPOLIS 23
CLEVELAND 21, Pittsburgh 21 (OT)
BALTIMORE 47, Buffalo 3
Kansas City 38, LA CHARGERS 28
Washington 24, ARIZONA 6
CAROLINA 16, Dallas 8
DENVER 27, Seattle 24
GREEN BAY 24, Chicago 23
NY Jets 48, DETROIT 17
LA Rams 33, OAKLAND 13

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK
AFC Offense
Patrick Mahomes, QB, Kansas City
AFC Defense
T.J. Watt, LB, Pittsburgh
AFC Special Teams
Jakeem Grant, KR/WR, Miami
NFC Offense
Ryan Fitzpatrick, QB, Tampa Bay
NFC Defense
Harrison Smith, S, Minnesota
NFC Special Teams
Greg Zuerlein, K, LA Rams
Pepsi NFL Rookie
Denzel Ward, CB, Cleveland

WEEK 2 / September 13-17

CINCINNATI 34, Baltimore 23
ATLANTA 31, Carolina 24
Indianapolis 21, WASHINGTON 9
TENNESSEE 20, Houston 17
TAMPA BAY 27, Philadelphia 21
Kansas City 42, PITTSBURGH 37
Miami 20, NY JETS 12
LA Chargers 31, BUFFALO 20
GREEN BAY 29, Minnesota 29 (OT)
NEW ORLEANS 21, Cleveland 18
SAN FRANCISCO 30, Detroit 27
LA RAMS 34, Arizona 0
JACKSONVILLE 31, New England 20
DENVER 20, Oakland 19
DALLAS 20, NY Giants 13
CHICAGO 24, Seattle 17

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK
AFC Offense
Patrick Mahomes, QB, Kansas City
AFC Defense
Darius Leonard, LB, Indianapolis
AFC Special Teams
Dane Cruikshank, S, Tennessee
NFC Offense
Ryan Fitzpatrick, QB, Tampa Bay
NFC Defense
Danny Trevathan, LB, Chicago
NFC Special Teams
Robbie Gould, K, San Francisco
Pepsi NFL Rookie
Darius Leonard, LB, Indianapolis

WEEK 3 / September 20-24

CLEVELAND 21, NY Jets 17
New Orleans 43, ATLANTA 37 (OT)
WASHINGTON 31, Green Bay 17
PHILADELPHIA 20, Indianapolis 16
Buffalo 27, MINNESOTA 6
MIAMI 28, Oakland 20
BALTIMORE 27, Denver 14
CAROLINA 31, Cincinnati 21
NY Giants 27, HOUSTON 22
Tennessee 9, JACKSONVILLE 6
KANSAS CITY 38, San Francisco 27
LA RAMS 35, LA Chargers 23
SEATTLE 24, Dallas 13
Chicago 16, ARIZONA 14
DETROIT 26, New England 10
Pittsburgh 30, TAMPA BAY 27

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK
AFC Offense
Ben Roethlisberger, QB, Pittsburgh
AFC Defense
Matt Milano, LB, Buffalo
AFC Special Teams
Justin Tucker, K, Baltimore
NFC Offense
Drew Brees, QB, New Orleans
NFC Defense
Efe Obada, DE, Carolina
NFC Special Teams
Blake Countess, DB, LA Rams
Pepsi NFL Rookie
Baker Mayfield, QB, Cleveland

WEEK 4 / September 27-October 1

LA RAMS 38, Minnesota 31
Cincinnati 37, ATLANTA 36
CHICAGO 48, Tampa Bay 10
DALLAS 26, Detroit 24
GREEN BAY 22, Buffalo 0
Houston 37, INDIANAPOLIS 34 (OT)
JACKSONVILLE 31, NY Jets 12
NEW ENGLAND 38, Miami 7
TENNESSEE 26, Philadelphia 23 (OT)
Seattle 20, ARIZONA 17
OAKLAND 45, Cleveland 42 (OT)
LA CHARGERS 29, San Francisco 27
New Orleans 33, NY GIANTS 18
Baltimore 26, PITTSBURGH 14
Kansas City 27, DENVER 23

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK
AFC Offense
Marcus Mariota, QB, Tennessee
AFC Defense
Jadeveon Clowney, DE, Houston
AFC Special Teams
Dwayne Harris, WR/PR, Oakland
NFC Offense
Jared Goff, QB, LA Rams
NFC Defense
Demario Davis, LB, New Orleans
NFC Special Teams
Brett Maher, K, Dallas
Pepsi NFL Rookie
Nick Chubb, RB, Cleveland

BULLISH BEAR: Mitchell Trubisky had Chicago on top in the NFC North.

with Taylor Gabriel hauling in two. "Hopefully, this is a day we look back at and say, 'Remember that day where [Trubisky] had that great game? And it helped catapult him into being a great quarterback,'" Bears coach Matt Nagy said. On defense, Chicago grabbed three interceptions and recorded four sacks, a performance led by defensive end Khalil Mack, who became the first NFL player with a sack and a forced fumble in four straight games since the Colts' Robert Mathis did it in 2005.

"YOU CAN'T BECOME A TRUE RAVEN UNTIL YOU WIN IN PITTSBURGH. I'VE OFFICIALLY BECOME A RAVEN."

– SAFETY ERIC WEDDLE, AFTER BALTIMORE'S WEEK 4 VICTORY

▸ **Going Fourth:** Marcus Mariota's 10-yard TD pass to Corey Davis capped a march that included three fourth-down conversions, giving the Titans a dramatic 26-23 overtime victory over the Eagles … J.J. Watt had two sacks and forced a pair of fumbles, and the Texans' defense stopped the Colts on fourth down in overtime, setting up Ka'imi Fairbairn's 37-yard field goal as the Texans edged Indianapolis, 37-34. In that same game, the Colts' Adam Vinatieri kicked two field goals, bringing his career total to 567 to pass Morten Andersen for the most in NFL history … Andy Dalton threw a 13-yard scoring pass to A.J. Green with seven seconds remaining, lifting the Bengals to a 37-36 victory over Atlanta … Ezekiel Elliott's 240 scrimmage yards (152 rushing, 88 receiving) powered the Cowboys past the Lions, 26-24.

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RAMS ROLLING AT MIDSEASON

The ability to both dominate teams and battle from behind had the NFC West leaders off to their best start in 49 years.

Crossing the season's halfway mark at 8-0 after a thrilling 29-27 victory over Green Bay, the Rams also stood as the NFL's final undefeated team. Jared Goff threw for 295 yards and three touchdowns in the win, while Los Angeles' special teams unit wrapped things up with a huge play in the final minutes.

After Greg Zuerlein's 34-yard field goal put the Rams ahead with 2:05 remaining, Ramik Wilson forced a fumble on the ensuing kickoff and then pounced on the loose ball, securing the franchise's best start to a season since 1969.

"That was a high-caliber, back-and-forth game," said Rams head coach Sean McVay, whose squad trailed, 10-0, in the second quarter before hitting its stride. "This team has demonstrated through eight games that while we have a long way to go, we're capable of winning in a bunch of different ways."

Against the Packers, Todd Gurley scored his league-leading 15th touchdown of the season: a 30-yard third-quarter reception that gave the Rams their first lead of the day. It was his 11th straight game with a TD, equaling Elroy "Crazy Legs" Hirsch's franchise record.

▶ **RAM TOUGH:** Jared Goff's 17 touchdown passes led all NFC players through eight weeks and propelled the Rams to a perfect 8-0 record.

The Rams also rallied in Week 5 to overtake Seattle, 33-31. Goff passed for 321 yards and Gurley scored three times as L.A. became just the fifth team in NFL history to tally at least 30 points in each of its first five games of the season. Gurley then rushed for 208 yards and two touchdowns in a 23-20 win at Denver, while the Rams' defense provided four takeaways and blocked a punt as part of a 39-10 victory over the 49ers.

"With the offense we have, we just need to keep feeding and feeding

Tony Avelar/AP Images

2018 NFL STANDINGS – THROUGH WEEK 8

AFC EAST	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
New England	6-2-0	.750	239	185
Miami	4-4-0	.500	174	219
N.Y. Jets	3-5-0	.375	192	200
Buffalo	2-6-0	.250	87	200

AFC NORTH	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Pittsburgh	4-2-1	.643	204	172
Cincinnati	5-3-0	.625	221	237
Baltimore	4-4-0	.500	197	137
Cleveland	2-5-1	.313	169	210

AFC SOUTH	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Houston	5-3-0	.625	197	167
Tennessee	3-4-0	.429	106	127
Jacksonville	3-5-0	.375	134	170
Indianapolis	3-5-0	.375	231	213

AFC WEST	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Kansas City	7-1-0	.875	290	205
L.A. Chargers	5-2-0	.714	195	163
Denver	3-5-0	.375	188	194
Oakland	1-6-0	.143	138	218

NFC EAST	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Washington	5-2-0	.714	146	134
Philadelphia	4-4-0	.500	178	156
Dallas	3-4-0	.429	140	123
N.Y. Giants	1-7-0	.125	150	205

NFC NORTH	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Chicago	4-3-0	.571	194	144
Minnesota	4-3-1	.563	197	195
Green Bay	3-3-1	.500	175	173
Detroit	3-4-0	.429	171	186

NFC SOUTH	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
New Orleans	6-1-0	.857	234	183
Carolina	5-2-0	.714	178	152
Atlanta	3-4-0	.429	190	212
Tampa Bay	3-4-0	.429	201	233

NFC WEST	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
L.A. Rams	8-0-0	1.000	264	155
Seattle	4-3-0	.571	171	131
Arizona	2-6-0	.250	110	199
San Francisco	1-7-0	.125	173	236

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▶ **CENTURY MAN:** The Vikings' Adam Thielen equaled an NFL record by having at least 100 receiving yards in eight straight games.

▶ **SEATTLE SCORER:** Tyler Lockett had TD receptions in six of the Seahawks' first seven games.

▶ **FIVE FOR FOUR:** Deshaun Watson threw five touchdown passes in leading Houston to a 42-23 win over Miami in Week 8.

▶ **SORROW AND SUPPORT:** In memory of those slain at a Pittsburgh synagogue, the Steelers incorporated the Star of David into their logo for their Oct. 28 home game.

them the ball," said defensive end Aaron Donald, who posted four sacks, five QB hits, and a forced fumble in the win over San Francisco. "Our offense is so explosive. We know that if we give them the ball, good things are going to happen."

WEEK 5

Drew Brees found himself in the spotlight during the Saints' 43-19 victory over the Redskins. The 39-year-old quarterback moved past Peyton Manning as the NFL's all-time leader in passing yards, and set the mark in dramatic fashion: with a 62-yard second-quarter touchdown throw to Tre'Quan Smith. "It's hard for me to reflect too much right now just because my career's not done," said Brees, who topped Manning's mark of 71,940 yards and finished the night with three TD passes, bringing his career total to 499. "There are still goals to be accomplished. There are still challenges to be met. And so I'm still very focused on that." Brees was far from the Saints' only star on the night. Smith added a 35-yard TD reception, Mark Ingram rushed for a pair of first-half scores, and Justin Hardee's 77-yard interception return set up a short touchdown run by Taysom Hill. The win was New Orleans' fourth in a row and kept the Saints atop the NFC South.

▶ **High Fives:** Adam Thielen totaled 116 receiving yards, including a three-yard touchdown, and Linval Joseph returned a fumble 64 yards for another score in the Vikings' 23-21 win over the Eagles … Graham Gano's 63-yard field goal with one second left equaled the second-longest in NFL history and lifted Carolina to a 33-31 victory over the Giants … Isaiah Crowell's 219-yard rushing day included a 77-yard scoring run that sparked the Jets to a 34-16 win over Denver … Sam Hubbard's 19-yard fumble-return touchdown with 2:37 to play completed the Bengals' comeback from a 17-point deficit as they upended the Dolphins, 27-17.

NEXT GEN GEM

The Eagles' **Carson Wentz** beat the odds on his 13-yard TD pass to Alshon Jeffrey in the team's Week 6 win over the Giants. According to NextGen stats, the pass, which saw Wentz sprinting to his right while throwing across his body into the end zone, had only an 18 percent chance of being completed.

WEEK 6

In a Sunday night thriller not decided until the final play, New England handed Kansas City its first setback of the season, 43-40. Tom Brady threw for 340 yards and one TD, ran for another score, and then led a late march that ended with Stephen Gostkowski's 28-yard field goal as time expired. The Patriots had held a 24-9 halftime lead, but found themselves locked in a tight battle over the final 30 minutes as Chiefs QB Patrick Mahomes connected with Tyreek Hill on three touchdown passes, the last of those a 75-yarder that knotted the game with just over three minutes remaining. Brady then took over, finding Rob Gronkowski open for a 39-yard completion that brought the ball deep into Kansas City territory and set up the

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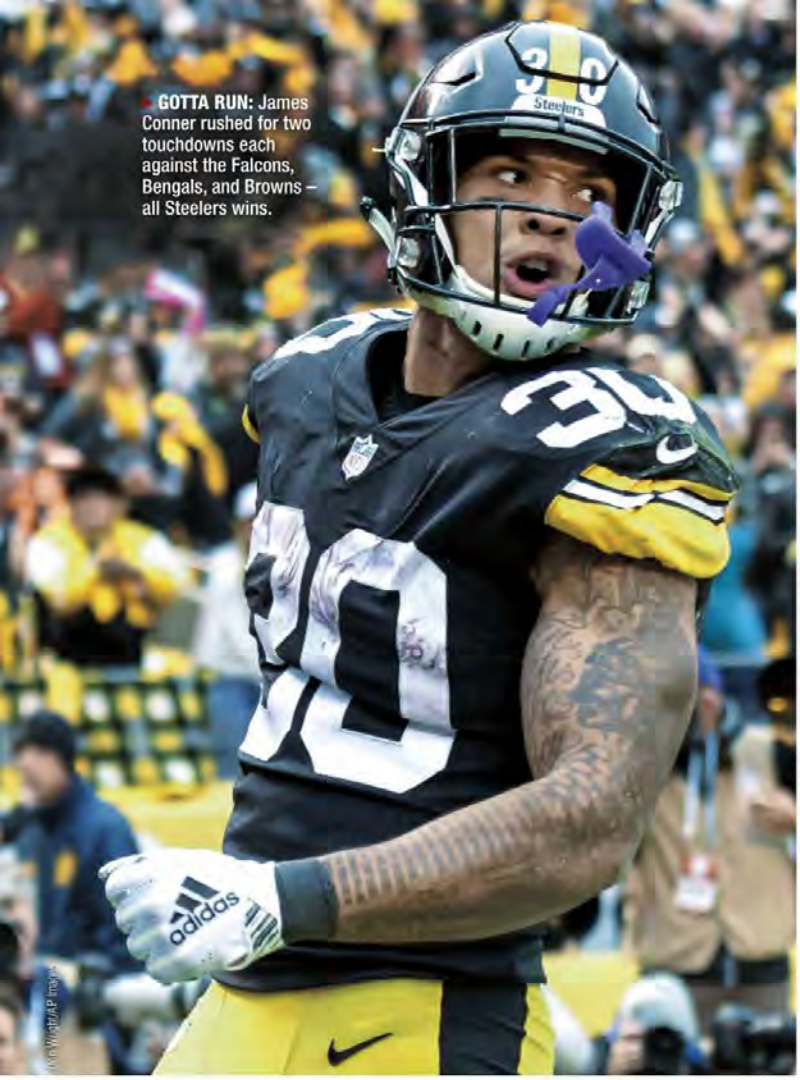


GOTTA RUN: James Conner rushed for two touchdowns each against the Falcons, Bengals, and Browns – all Steelers wins.

CHALK TALK: The Panthers' Ron Rivera (left) chats with Ravens coach John Harbaugh.

MIRROR IMAGES: Saquon Barkley (left) and Adrian Peterson share a number ... and a talent for running the ball.

winning kick. "It's tough to slow [Kansas City] down, they've been scoring a lot of points all year," said Brady, who won his NFL-record 200th regular-season game as a starting quarterback. "Glad we had our last shot and glad we took advantage of it."

Super Sixes: James Conner rushed for 111 yards and two scores, and Antonio Brown caught the go-ahead 31-yard touchdown pass with just 10 seconds remaining as the Steelers edged the Bengals, 28-21 … In the first of three games in the 2018 NFL London Series, Russell Wilson threw for 222 yards and three TDs while leading the Seahawks to a comfortable 27-3 win over the Raiders … Dak Prescott totaled 183 passing yards and rushed for another 82 in the Cowboys' 40-7 victory over Jacksonville … Jason Myers converted all seven of his field goal attempts in the Jets' 42-34 win over Indianapolis … Green Bay scored 10 points in the final two minutes – on a 16-yard Aaron Rodgers-to-Davante Adams touchdown pass and Mason Crosby's 27-yard field goal – to edge the 49ers, 33-30.

"MY DAUGHTER ASKED BEFORE THE GAME, 'DADDY, HOW COME YOU DON'T SCORE TOUCHDOWNS?' SO THAT ONE WAS FOR HER."

– CHIEFS SAFETY RON PARKER, WHO RETURNED AN INTERCEPTION FOR A TD AGAINST THE BENGALS IN WEEK 7

NEXT GEN GEM

Devin McCourty reached 22.05 mph on his 82-yard interception-return touchdown in the Patriots' Week 8 win over the Bills, the fastest of any ball carrier in the first half of the season.

WEEK 7

Washington strengthened its hold on the NFC East with a gritty 20-17 win over the Cowboys. The Redskins seemed in control after linebacker Ryan Kerrigan strip-sacked Dallas QB Dak Prescott and Preston Smith recovered the ball for a touchdown that gave his team a 10-point fourth-quarter lead. "That's what us pass rushers want to do, put pressure on the quarterback and hopefully sack him," Kerrigan said. "It is gratifying to get to him, that's for sure." Prescott rebounded, however, to cap the Cowboys' ensuing drive with a one-yard TD run, and after their defense forced a punt, he completed three straight passes to move his team into field goal range. But a five-yard penalty for a "snap infraction" pushed Brett Maher's attempt back to 52 yards, and his kick bounced off the left upright as time expired. Alex Smith had put Washington on the board first with a 23-yard scoring pass to Kapri Bibbs, and Adrian Peterson added 99 rushing yards in the win, while the Redskins' defense limited Dallas back Ezekiel Elliott to just 33 rushing yards on 15 carries.

Seven's Stars: Cam Newton's one-yard scoring pass to Greg Olsen with 1:22 remaining completed a fourth-quarter rally from a 17-point deficit as the Panthers edged the Eagles, 21-17 … Philip Rivers threw TD passes of 75 and 55 yards to lead the Chargers to a 20-19 victory over Tennessee at London's Wembley Stadium … Kerryon Johnson rushed for 158 yards and Matthew Stafford threw a pair of scoring passes to Michael Roberts in the Lions' 32-21 win over Miami … Cordarrelle Patterson returned a

SCORES & AWARDS

WEEK 5 / October 4-8

NEW ENGLAND 38, Indianapolis 24
BUFFALO 13, Tennessee 12
CAROLINA 33, NY Giants 31
CINCINNATI 27, Miami 17
CLEVELAND 12, Baltimore 9 (OT)
DETROIT 31, Green Bay 23
KANSAS CITY 30, Jacksonville 14
NY JETS 34, Denver 16
PITTSBURGH 41, Atlanta 17
LA CHARGERS 26, Oakland 10
Minnesota 23, PHILADELPHIA 21
Arizona 28, SAN FRANCISCO 18
LA Rams 33, SEATTLE 31
HOUSTON 19, Dallas 16 (OT)
NEW ORLEANS 43, Washington 19
Byes: Chicago, Tampa Bay

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK
AFC Offense
Isaiah Crowell, RB, NY Jets
AFC Defense
T.J. Watt, LB, Pittsburgh
AFC Special Teams
Denzel Ward, CB, Cleveland
NFC Offense
Drew Brees, QB, New Orleans
NFC Defense
Chandler Jones, DE, Arizona
NFC Special Teams
Graham Gano, K, Carolina
Pepsi NFL Rookie
Denzel Ward, CB, Cleveland

WEEK 6 / October 11-15

Philadelphia 34, NY GIANTS 13
ATLANTA 34, Tampa Bay 29
Pittsburgh 28, CINCINNATI 21
LA Chargers 38, CLEVELAND 14
HOUSTON 20, Buffalo 13
MIAMI 31, Chicago 28 (OT)
MINNESOTA 27, Arizona 17
NY JETS 42, Indianapolis 34
Seattle 27, OAKLAND 3 (London)
WASHINGTON 23, Carolina 17
LA Rams 23, DENVER 20
DALLAS 40, Jacksonville 7
Baltimore 21, TENNESSEE 0
NEW ENGLAND 43, Kansas City 40
GREEN BAY 33, San Francisco 30
Byes: Detroit, New Orleans

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK
AFC Offense
Albert Wilson, WR, Miami
AFC Defense
Za'Darius Smith, LB, Baltimore
AFC Special Teams
Jason Myers, K, NY Jets
NFC Offense
Todd Gurley, RB, LA Rams
NFC Defense
Frank Clark, DE, Seattle
NFC Special Teams
Mason Crosby, K, Green Bay
Pepsi NFL Rookie
Saquon Barkley, RB, NY Giants

WEEK 7 / October 18-22

Denver 45, ARIZONA 10
LA CHARGERS 20, Tennessee 19 (London)
New England 38, CHICAGO 31
INDIANAPOLIS 37, Buffalo 5
Houston 20, JACKSONVILLE 7
Detroit 32, MIAMI 21
Minnesota 37, NY JETS 17
Carolina 21, PHILADELPHIA 17
TAMPA BAY 26, Cleveland 23 (OT)
New Orleans 24, BALTIMORE 23
WASHINGTON 20, Dallas 17
LA Rams 39, SAN FRANCISCO 10
KANSAS CITY 45, Cincinnati 10
ATLANTA 23, NY Giants 20
Byes: Green Bay, Oakland, Pittsburgh, Seattle

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK
AFC Offense
Emmanuel Sanders, WR, Denver
AFC Defense
Mike Mitchell, S, Indianapolis
AFC Special Teams
Dont'a Hightower, LB, New England
NFC Offense
Cam Newton, QB, Carolina
NFC Defense
Aaron Donald, DT, LA Rams
NFC Special Teams
Giorgio Tavecchio, K, Atlanta
Pepsi NFL Rookie
Baker Mayfield, QB, Cleveland

WEEK 8 / October 25-29

HOUSTON 42, Miami 23
Philadelphia 24, JACKSONVILLE 18 (London)
CAROLINA 36, Baltimore 21
CHICAGO 24, NY Jets 10
CINCINNATI 37, Tampa Bay 34
Seattle 28, DETROIT 14
KANSAS CITY 30, Denver 23
Washington 20, NY GIANTS 13
PITTSBURGH 33, Cleveland 18
Indianapolis 42, OAKLAND 28
ARIZONA 18, San Francisco 15
LA RAMS 29, Green Bay 27
New Orleans 30, MINNESOTA 20
New England 25, BUFFALO 6
Byes: Atlanta, Dallas, LA Chargers, Tennessee

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK
AFC Offense
James Conner, RB, Pittsburgh
AFC Defense
Dee Ford, LB, Kansas City
AFC Special Teams
Adam Vinatieri, K, Indianapolis
NFC Offense
Adrian Peterson, RB, Washington
NFC Defense
P.J. Williams, CB, New Orleans
NFC Special Teams
Michael Dickson, P, Seattle
Pepsi NFL Rookie
Darius Leonard, LB, Indianapolis

OUTKICKING THEM ALL: The Colts' Adam Vinatieri became the NFL's all-time leading scorer during his team's win over Oakland.

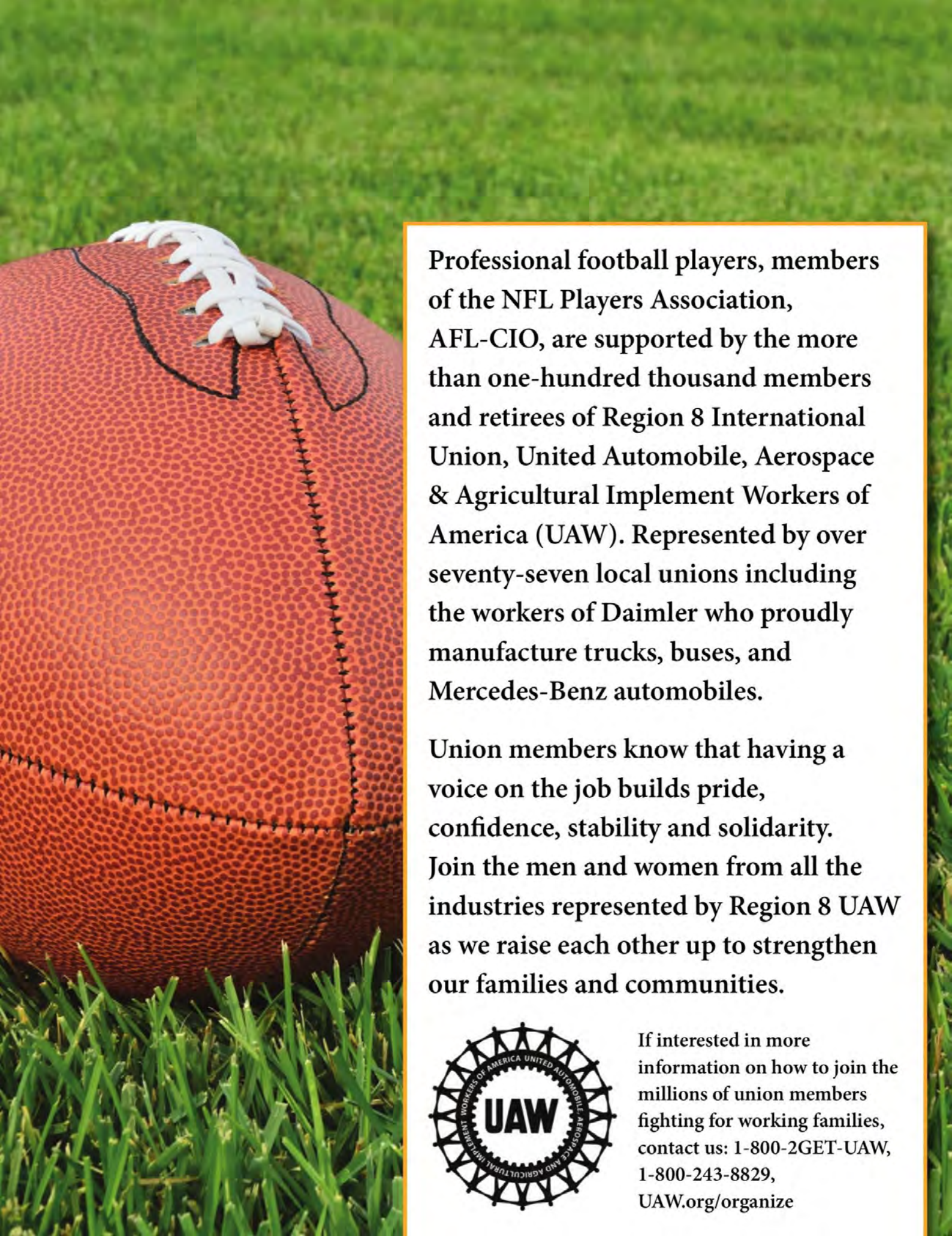
Ben Margot/AP Images

kickoff 95 yards for a score and Tom Brady threw for 277 yards and three touchdowns, helping the Patriots overpower the Bears, 38-31.

WEEK 8

Deshaun Watson matched a career-high with five TD passes to guide the Texans' 42-23 decision over the Dolphins, the fifth straight win for Houston following an 0-3 start. Watson finished the night 16-of-20 passing for 239 yards, which included a 73-yard scoring strike to Will Fuller at the end of the third quarter that broke the game open. "I think we've got the best offense in the NFL," said receiver DeAndre Hopkins, who caught two TD passes and finished with 82 receiving yards. "What we put up against a good defense, what we've shown in these past five games that we've won, we're up there with the best of the best." Jordan Thomas also had a pair of touchdown grabs in the win, including a 13-yarder that put the Texans ahead for good, and Lamar Miller rushed for 133 yards and a TD.

▸ **Greats from Eight:** Alvin Kamara scored twice and P.J. Williams returned an interception 45 yards for a touchdown to spark the Saints' 30-20 win over the Vikings … The NFL's 2018 London Series ended with the Eagles beating the Jaguars, 24-18, in front of 85,870 fans at Wembley Stadium, the largest single-game attendance since the league began playing annual games in London … Patrick Mahomes (24-of-34 passing, 303 yards, 4 TDs) became just the fourth QB in league history to throw at least four TD passes in three consecutive games, pacing the Chiefs' 30-23 win over Denver … Adrian Peterson's 64-yard touchdown run highlighted his 149-yard rushing day that powered Washington's 20-13 victory over the Giants … Russell Wilson posted a 158.3 passer rating, completing 14 of 17 passes for 248 yards and three TDs as the Seahawks stormed past Detroit, 28-14.



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SAINTS STRIKE WINNING TUNE

Unbeaten since an opening-week setback, New Orleans stood as the NFL's hottest team heading into the home stretch.

The Saints' across-the-board talent was on full display Thanksgiving night in a 31-17 victory over division rival Atlanta, with Drew Brees firing four touchdown passes and the defense racking up six sacks and four turnovers.

Brees made use of all his weapons in the win – the team's 10th straight – connecting with Tommylee Lewis, Austin Carr, Dan Arnold, and Keith Kirkwood for TDs. On the other side of the ball, the Saints forced three red-zone fumbles in the first half and later added an A.J. Klein interception that kept the Falcons at bay.

"I do love the way we played today," said defensive end Cameron Jordan, who contributed two sacks. "I do love the four turnovers. I do love the sacks. I do love the pressures. I do love the quarterback hits. For all intents and purposes, we had our Thanksgiving."

Three weeks earlier, New Orleans threw down an important marker in the race for the NFC's top seed, dealing the Rams their first loss of the season, 45-35. Brees totaled 346 passing yards and four TDs, with Michael Thomas chalking up a franchise-record 211 receiving yards, which included a late 72-yard TD grab to seal the outcome. Alvin Kamara put the Saints in front early by scoring three first-half touchdowns, but the Rams didn't go away quietly, rallying from a 21-point deficit to tie the game in the fourth quarter before Wil Lutz's 54-yard field goal swung things back in New Orleans' favor.

▶ **DOUBLE TROUBLE:** Alvin Kamara's skill set out of the backfield produced 15 TDs – 11 rushing and four receiving – in the Saints' first 11 games.

Brees was similarly sensational in a 51-14 victory at Cincinnati in Week 10, throwing for three touchdowns, including the 509th of his career, to move past Brett Favre for second-most in NFL history. A

Kevin Terrell/AP Images

2018 NFL STANDINGS – THROUGH WEEK 12

AFC EAST	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
New England	8-3-0	.727	307	249
Miami	5-6-0	.455	223	283
Buffalo	4-7-0	.364	161	272
N.Y. Jets	3-8-0	.273	221	281

AFC NORTH	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Pittsburgh	7-3-1	.682	316	249
Baltimore	6-5-0	.545	271	198
Cincinnati	5-6-0	.455	276	347
Cleveland	4-6-1	.409	253	283

AFC SOUTH	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Houston	8-3-0	.727	273	222
Indianapolis	6-5-0	.545	325	273
Tennessee	5-6-0	.455	195	223
Jacksonville	3-8-0	.273	197	243

AFC WEST	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Kansas City	9-2-0	.818	404	294
L.A. Chargers	8-3-0	.727	307	219
Denver	5-6-0	.455	252	252
Oakland	2-9-0	.182	187	327

NFC EAST	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Dallas	6-5-0	.545	234	213
Washington	6-5-0	.545	220	229
Philadelphia	5-6-0	.455	230	253
N.Y. Giants	3-8-0	.273	237	288

NFC NORTH	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Chicago	8-3-0	.727	317	211
Minnesota	6-4-1	.591	265	246
Green Bay	4-6-1	.409	264	267
Detroit	4-7-0	.364	238	286

NFC SOUTH	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
New Orleans	10-1-0	.909	409	256
Carolina	6-5-0	.545	287	282
Atlanta	4-7-0	.364	280	307
Tampa Bay	4-7-0	.364	294	338

NFC WEST	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
L.A. Rams	10-1-0	.909	389	282
Seattle	6-5-0	.545	276	243
Arizona	2-9-0	.182	155	293
San Francisco	2-9-0	.182	239	293

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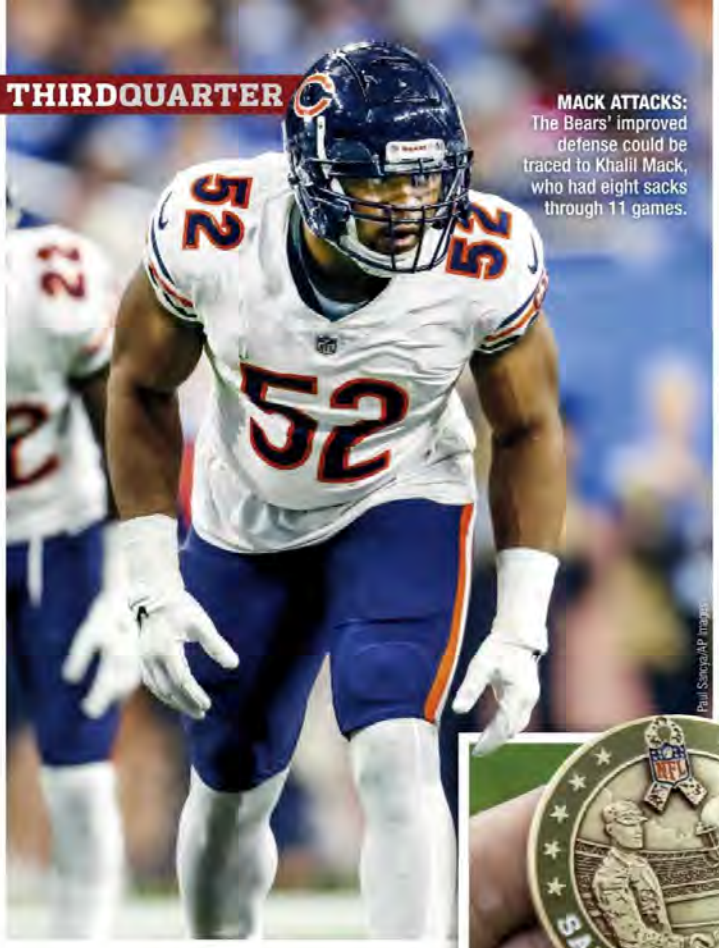

MACK ATTACKS: The Bears' improved defense could be traced to Khalil Mack, who had eight sacks through 11 games.

Paul Sancya/AP Images

ROLLING RIVERS: Philip Rivers had the Chargers in position for a playoff berth with efforts that included 25 straight completions in a win over Arizona.

Jae C. Hong/AP Images

Gene Lower/AP Images

COIN OF DISTINCTION: As part of the NFL's Salute to Service campaign, the official USAA coin was used for pregame coin tosses during November.

week later against the defending Super Bowl champion Eagles, Brees dominated en route to a 48-7 win.

"I think everybody knows how special we can be and everyone knows the end goal," said defensive tackle Sheldon Rankins. "If everybody here isn't thinking Super Bowl, then they're in the wrong locker room."

WEEK 9

While the Saints were drawing most of the attention in the NFC South, the Panthers quietly stayed in their shadows by improving to 6-2 with a 42-28 win over Tampa Bay. Christian McCaffrey rushed for 79 yards and two touchdowns, and added a team-leading 78 receiving yards, offsetting a four-TD effort from the Bucs' Ryan Fitzpatrick. "We were playing with momentum and when you're playing like that, you have a lot of juice coming your way, so it does make it fun," McCaffrey said. That momentum stemmed from touchdowns on five straight first-half possessions, which included Curtis Samuel's double-reverse 33-yard scoring run and a 17-yard Cam Newton-to-Greg Olsen TD throw. After Tampa Bay pulled within 35-28 late in the game, Newton provided some breathing room with a 19-yard end zone strike to Samuel, and cornerback Donte Jackson followed with an interception that preserved the win.

▸ **To The Nines:** Philip Rivers became the fourth quarterback in NFL history to start at least 200 consecutive games, throwing for 228 yards and two TDs while leading the Chargers to a 25-17 win at Seattle … Defensive end Danielle Hunter had 3.5 of the Vikings' franchise-record 10 sacks and added a 32-yard fumble-return touchdown in his team's 24-9 victory over Detroit …The Bears tallied a pair of defensive TDs, on Eddie Jackson's 65-yard fumble return and Leonard Floyd's 19-yard interception return, on their way to a 41-9 win at Buffalo … James White's one-yard touchdown run snapped a fourth-quarter tie and Tom Brady followed with a 55-yard scoring strike to Josh Gordon that carried the Patriots past Green Bay, 31-17 … Patrick Mahomes fired three TD passes in the Chiefs' 37-21 victory at Cleveland, giving him 29 for his career, more than any other player in league history through his first 10 games.

NEXT GEN GEM

Amari Cooper's addition to the Cowboys had an immediate effect on the team's passing game. QB Dak Prescott's completion percentage rose from 62.1 percent in Weeks 1-8 to 70.1 percent in Weeks 9-10, and his passer rating jumped 87.4 to 101.2.

WEEK 10

Tennessee took a step forward in the AFC South while snapping the Patriots' six-game winning streak, 34-10, behind Marcus Mariota's two scoring passes, a pair of touchdown runs by Derrick Henry, and a defense that kept New England in check. Mariota found Jonnu Smith open for a four-yard scoring pass on the Titans' first drive, and he put his team in the end zone again a few minutes later with a 23-yard strike to Corey Davis. Meanwhile, the Tennessee defense allowed just 40 rushing yards, limited the Patriots to three third-down conversions in 15 attempts, and managed three sacks. "You got to make Tom (Brady) blink, and if you make him blink and have to go to a second read, you got a chance," said Titans coach Mike Vrabel of the New England QB and his former teammate. "But if you let him rip it to the first guy he looks at, it's going to be a long day." After the Patriots drew within 17-10 in the third quarter, Tennessee closed things out on Henry's scoring runs of one and 10 yards and Ryan Succop's 31-yard field goal.

▸ **Perfect Tens:** Ben Roethlisberger completed 22 of 25 passes for 328 yards and five touchdowns, producing a 158.3 QB rating, the highest

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ZOOMING ZEKE: Ezekiel Elliott had 100-yard rushing games in each of Dallas' three November wins.

John Amis/AP Images

FOR THE WIN: The Rams' Gerald Everett heads to the end zone with a 40-yard scoring catch, the 14th TD of the game and the final points in his team's Week 11 victory over the Chiefs.

Kevin Terrell/AP Images

PREGAME POINTS: Rams coach Sean McVay (left) chats with Chiefs counterpart Andy Reid prior to their game.

Kelly Kline/NFLP Images

"IT'S ABOUT WHO'S GOT THE ATTITUDE, THE FINISH, WHO'S GOING TO STRAIN AND DO THE RIGHT THING."

– SEATTLE CENTER JUSTIN BRITT, AFTER HIS TEAM RALLIED TO DEFEAT CAROLINA, 30-27, IN WEEK 12

possible mark, as the Steelers won their fifth straight game by beating Carolina, 52-21 … Eric Ebron caught a pair of TD passes and also ran for a score, and Malik Hooker recovered a fumble in the final minute, helping the Colts hold off Jacksonville, 29-26 … Nick Chubb totaled 209 scrimmage yards (176 rushing, 33 receiving) and scored two TDs to pace the Browns' 28-16 victory over Atlanta … Ezekiel Elliott's one-yard scoring run with 3:19 to play provided the winning points as Dallas edged the Eagles, 27-20 … Aaron Jones had a pair of TD runs among his 145 rushing yards in the Packers' 31-12 win over Miami.

NEXT GEN GEM

Lamar Miller became the first player in NFL history with two 95+ yard TD runs when he sprinted 97 yards for a score in Houston's 34-17 win over the Titans in Week 12.

WEEK 11

A wild prime-time affair between two of the league's top teams went to the host Rams, who defeated the Chiefs, 54-51, in the third highest-scoring game in NFL history. The teams combined for 1,001 total yards, 56 first downs, and 14 touchdowns, the last of those coming on a 40-yard pass from Los Angeles QB Jared Goff to Gerald Everett with just 1:49 remaining that provided the winning points. "It was a crazy, crazy game," said Goff, who finished with 413 passing yards and four TDs, and also ran for a score. "There were times when we felt like we were going to finish them, and times when it was the other way around, when we had to claw back into it." The Rams led, 13-0, and later were in front 40-30, but Kansas City continued to mount comebacks. Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes threw for 478 yards and six touchdowns, including a 73-yard strike to Tyreek Hill early in the fourth quarter and a 10-yarder to Chris Conley that briefly put his team ahead, 51-47. For all the offense, however, the defenses also made a big impact. The game featured three defensive touchdowns, two by Rams linebacker Samson Ebukam, and Los Angeles' late lead held up when Marcus Peters and Lamarcus Joyner grabbed interceptions on Kansas City's final two drives.

Eyes on Eleven: Justin Reid's 101-yard interception-return touchdown proved pivotal as Houston defeated the Redskins, 23-21, for its seventh consecutive victory … Russell Wilson connected with Ed Dickson on a 15-yard go-ahead touchdown pass with 5:08 remaining that lifted the Seahawks over Green Bay, 27-24 … Ravens quarterback Lamar Jackson, making his first career start, accounted for 150 passing yards and added another 119 rushing in a 24-21 win over the Bengals … Chicago won its fourth straight game, getting a 27-yard interception-return touchdown from Eddie Jackson as part of a 25-20 decision over Minnesota … The Colts' winning streak also reached four games as Andrew Luck threw for 297 yards and three touchdowns to pace a 38-10 victory over Tennessee.

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SCORES & AWARDS

WEEK 9 / November 1-5

SAN FRANCISCO 34, Oakland 3
Pittsburgh 23, BALTIMORE 16
Chicago 41, BUFFALO 9
CAROLINA 42, Tampa Bay 28
Kansas City 37, CLEVELAND 21
MIAMI 13, NY Jets 6
MINNESOTA 24, Detroit 9
Atlanta 38, WASHINGTON 14
Houston 19, DENVER 17
LA Chargers 25, SEATTLE 17
NEW ORLEANS 45, LA Rams 35
NEW ENGLAND 31, Green Bay 17
Tennessee 28, DALLAS 14
Byes: Arizona, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Jacksonville, NY Giants, Philadelphia

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK
AFC Offense
Kareem Hunt, RB, Kansas City
AFC Defense
Desmond King, CB, LA Chargers
AFC Special Teams
Matt Haack, P, Miami
NFC Offense
Michael Thomas, WR, New Orleans
NFC Defense
Danielle Hunter, DE, Minnesota
NFC Special Teams
Bradley Pinion, P, San Francisco
Pepsi NFL Rookie
Baker Mayfield, QB, Cleveland

WEEK 10 / November 8-12

PITTSBURGH 52, Carolina 21
CHICAGO 34, Detroit 22
New Orleans 51, CINCINNATI 14
CLEVELAND 28, Atlanta 16
INDIANAPOLIS 29, Jacksonville 26
KANSAS CITY 26, Arizona 14
Buffalo 41, NY JETS 10
Washington 16, TAMPA BAY 3
TENNESSEE 34, New England 10
LA Chargers 20, OAKLAND 6
GREEN BAY 31, Miami 12
LA RAMS 36, Seattle 31
Dallas 27, PHILADELPHIA 20
NY Giants 27, SAN FRANCISCO 23
Byes: Baltimore, Denver, Houston, Minnesota

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK
AFC Offense
Ben Roethlisberger, QB, Pittsburgh
AFC Defense
Wesley Woodyard, LB, Tennessee
AFC Special Teams
Stephen Hauschka, K, Buffalo
NFC Offense
Mitchell Trubisky, QB, Chicago
NFC Defense
Leighton Vander Esch, LB, Dallas
NFC Special Teams
Tress Way, Washington
Pepsi NFL Rookie
Nick Chubb, RB, Cleveland

WEEK 11 / November 15-19

SEATTLE 27, Green Bay 24
Dallas 22, ATLANTA 19
BALTIMORE 24, Cincinnati 21
DETROIT 20, Carolina 19
INDIANAPOLIS 38, Tennessee 10
NY GIANTS 38, Tampa Bay 35
Houston 23, WASHINGTON 21
Pittsburgh 20, JACKSONVILLE 16
Oakland 23, ARIZONA 21
Denver 23, LA CHARGERS 22
NEW ORLEANS 48, Philadelphia 7
CHICAGO 25, Minnesota 20
LA RAMS 54, Kansas City 51
Byes: Buffalo, Cleveland, Miami, New England, NY Jets, San Francisco

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK
AFC Offense
Andrew Luck, QB, Indianapolis
AFC Defense
Von Miller, LB, Denver
AFC Special Teams
Daniel Carlson, K, Oakland
NFC Offense
Saquon Barkley, RB, NY Giants
NFC Defense
Samson Ebukam, LB, LA Rams
NFC Special Teams
Cody Parkey, K, Chicago
Pepsi NFL Rookie
Tre'Quan Smith, WR, New Orleans

WEEK 12 / November 22-26

Chicago 23, DETROIT 16
DALLAS 31, Washington 23
NEW ORLEANS 31, Atlanta 17
BALTIMORE 34, Oakland 17
BUFFALO 24, Jacksonville 21
Seattle 30, CAROLINA 27
Cleveland 35, CINCINNATI 20
New England 27, NY JETS 13
PHILADELPHIA 25, NY Giants 22
TAMPA BAY 27, San Francisco 9
LA CHARGERS 45, Arizona 10
INDIANAPOLIS 27, Miami 24
DENVER 24, Pittsburgh 17
MINNESOTA 24, Green Bay 17
HOUSTON 34, Tennessee 17
Byes: Kansas City, LA Rams

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK
AFC Offense
Philip Rivers, QB, LA Chargers
AFC Defense
J.J. Watt, DE, Houston
AFC Special Teams
Cyrus Jones, PR, Baltimore
NFC Offense
Amari Cooper, WR, Dallas
NFC Defense
Eddie Jackson, S, Chicago
NFC Special Teams
Sebastian Janikowski, K, Seattle
Pepsi NFL Rookie
Baker Mayfield, QB, Cleveland

AIR INDY: Andrew Luck threw for 297 yards and three touchdowns in the Colts' win over the Titans in Week 11.

Jeff Roberson/AP Images

WEEK 12

Chargers quarterback Philip Rivers put on a record-breaking display in Los Angeles' 45-10 victory over Arizona. He set NFL single-game marks with 25 consecutive completions and a 96.6 completion percentage, highlighting a day that saw him go 28 of 29 for 259 yards and three touchdowns. "I didn't know it was 25 in a row," Rivers admitted after the Chargers improved to 8-3. "I knew we hadn't missed, but I didn't know where it was. A lot goes into completing the ball, more than just me throwing it. There were some catches that could easily haven fallen incomplete." Rivers also became just the fourth QB in league history to throw multiple touchdown passes in each of his team's first 11 games, joining Johnny Unitas, Peyton Manning, and Aaron Rodgers on that list. The first, a nine-yarder to Mike Williams, ignited the Chargers' offense after the Cardinals had staked a 10-0 lead. Melvin Gordon followed with two touchdown runs, and Rivers then led a two-minute drill that took his team 80 yards in 10 plays – all passes – capped by another scoring toss to Williams, making it 28-10 at halftime.

▸ **Side Dishes:** Chase Daniel threw TD passes to Taquan Mizzell and Tarik Cohen, and Kyle Fuller grabbed a late end zone interception, keying NFC North-leading Chicago's 23-16 victory over the Lions … Amari Cooper caught scoring passes of 40 and 90 yards in Dallas' 31-23 win over Washington … Baker Mayfield completed 19 of 26 passes for 258 yards and four TDs, and Nick Chubb rushed for 84 yards and another score, to carry the Browns past the Bengals, 35-20 … Terrell Suggs' 43-yard fumble-return touchdown capped the Ravens' 34-17 win over Oakland … Andrew Luck (30 of 37 passing, 343 yards, 3 TDs) rallied the Colts from a 10-point fourth quarter deficit to edge Miami, 27-24, the winning points coming on Adam Vinatieri's 32-yard field goal as time expired … Phillip Lindsay snapped a fourth-quarter tie with a two-yard touchdown run, and Shelby Harris picked off a pass in the end zone with 1:02 remaining, as the Broncos edged Pittsburgh, 24-17, to snap the Steelers' six-game winning streak.

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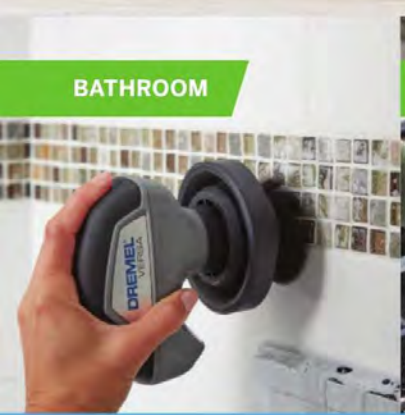

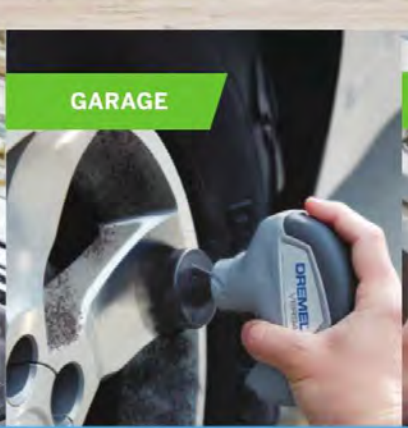

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RAVENS RULE THE AFC NORTH

A season-ending surge, punctuated by some Week 17 dramatics, carried Baltimore to a division crown.

The Ravens won six of their final seven games to claim the division for the first time since 2012, their success driven by a dynamic ground game and a tenacious defense.

Baltimore fashioned the conference's top rushing attack, averaging 152.6 yards per game on the ground, while its defense allowed the fewest yards in the NFL (292.2 per game) and finished second in points allowed (17.9 per game).

That defense was in peak form in Week 13's 26-16 win over Atlanta, limiting the Falcons to 131 total yards, their fewest in 19 seasons. Cornerback Tavon Young clinched the decision with a 12-yard fumble-return touchdown.

"Our defense, they're rolling," said Ravens quarterback Lamar Jackson, whose 75 rushing yards included a 13-yard touchdown.

▶ **RAVENS ON A RUN:** Lamar Jackson's play at quarterback ignited Baltimore, which reached the AFC playoffs for the first time since 2014.

Even a Week 14 setback at Kansas City foretold good things. The Ravens fell in overtime, 27-24, but had the hosts (and eventual AFC top seed) on the ropes most of the day thanks to Jackson's two touchdown passes and a ground game that gained 194 yards.

They wouldn't lose again.

Baltimore pounded out 242 rushing yards in a 20-12 decision over Tampa Bay in Week 15, with Gus Edwards accounting for a team-high 104 of that total. That was followed by a 22-10 win over the Chargers, and by the end of Week 16, the Ravens had leaped into first place in the AFC North. Their defense again proved disruptive, producing four sacks, a pair of interceptions, and a 62-yard fumble-return touchdown by Young that ended a final Los Angeles threat.

Carolyn Kaster/AP Images

FINAL 2018 NFL STANDINGS

*Division Champion +Wild Card

AFC EAST	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
New England*	11-5-0	.688	436	325
Miami	7-9-0	.438	319	433
Buffalo	6-10-0	.375	269	374
N.Y. Jets	4-12-0	.250	333	441

AFC NORTH	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Baltimore*	10-6-0	.625	389	287
Pittsburgh	9-6-1	.594	428	360
Cleveland	7-8-1	.469	359	392
Cincinnati	6-10-0	.375	368	455

AFC SOUTH	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Houston*	11-5-0	.688	402	316
Indianapolis+	10-6-0	.625	433	344
Tennessee	9-7-0	.563	310	303
Jacksonville	5-11-0	.313	245	316

AFC WEST	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Kansas City*	12-4-0	.750	565	421
L.A. Chargers+	12-4-0	.750	428	329
Denver	6-10-0	.375	329	349
Oakland	4-12-0	.250	290	467

NFC EAST	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Dallas*	10-6-0	.625	339	324
Philadelphia+	9-7-0	.563	367	348
Washington	7-9-0	.438	281	359
N.Y. Giants	5-11-0	.313	369	412

NFC NORTH	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Chicago*	12-4-0	.750	421	283
Minnesota	8-7-1	.531	360	341
Green Bay	6-9-1	.406	376	400
Detroit	6-10-0	.375	324	360

NFC SOUTH	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
New Orleans*	13-3-0	.813	504	353
Atlanta	7-9-0	.438	414	423
Carolina	7-9-0	.438	376	382
Tampa Bay	5-11-0	.313	396	464

NFC WEST	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
L.A. Rams*	13-3-0	.813	527	384
Seattle+	10-6-0	.625	428	347
San Francisco	4-12-0	.250	342	435
Arizona	3-13-0	.188	225	425

Winslow Townson/AP Images

SWEET 16: Sparked by QB Tom Brady, the Patriots reached the 10-win mark for the 16th straight season.

Bill Kostroun/AP Images

GROUND DELIVERY: Derek Henry's big finish to the season put him over 1,000 rushing yards for the first time in his career.

Roger Steinman/AP Images

CHECKING IT TWICE: A youngster at AT&T Stadium had a list of presents that Cowboys fans were hoping Santa would deliver.

"This showed who we are," said cornerback Brandon Carr, who grabbed his second interception of the season. "We've been talking about getting turnovers the whole season. Now we're getting them."

Still, winning the division – and perhaps even earning a playoff spot – came down to the season's final Sunday. Facing an energetic Browns squad, the Ravens proved up to the task. Kenneth Dixon rushed for 117 yards and Jackson scored two more TDs on the ground, part of the team's 296-yard rushing day, while the defense made a final stand that protected the 26-24 victory. Cleveland was on the edge of field goal range, reaching the Ravens 39-yard line in the closing seconds before C.J. Mosley's interception locked things up.

"There were some nerves," said tight end Hayden Hurst. "But we were confident that at some point one of those guys would make a big play and, sure enough, C.J. did."

With the win, the Ravens joined Chicago, Dallas, Houston, Indianapolis, the L.A. Chargers, and Seattle as teams to qualify for the playoffs after missing out in 2017.

WEEK 13

Dallas showed its mettle in a clash against the Saints, putting the clamps on one of the league's top-scoring offenses to earn a 13-10 victory. The Cowboys held New Orleans to its lowest point total in three seasons and surrendered just 176 total yards while handing the Saints their first loss since Week 1. Brett Maher's 26-yard field goal put Dallas on the board and Dak Prescott's 16-yard pass to Ezekiel Elliott made it 10-0. Maher added a 46-yard field goal before halftime, capping a drive that lasted more than nine minutes, and the defense took it from there. Cornerback Jourdan Lewis wrapped up the win, Dallas' fourth straight, by picking off a pass with just over two minutes to play. "Everybody knew it. We had to keep the ball away from (Saints QB Drew) Brees," Cowboys owner Jerry Jones said. "I must tell you, the defense played beyond my expectations. They played like a championship defense." Brees did hit a milestone in the game, becoming the first player in league history with 10 seasons of 30-or-more touchdown passes.

NEXT GEN GEM

The Jets' **Sam Darnold** scrambled 46.8 yards before connecting with Robby Anderson on a seven-yard TD pass in a Week 14 win over Buffalo. It was the most scramble yards by a quarterback on any pass attempt since NextGenStats began tracking scramble distance in 2016.

▸ **News of Note:** The Rams secured the season's first playoff berth, wrapping up the NFC West with a 30-16 win over the Lions, aided by Todd Gurley's 132 rushing yards and two TDs … Seattle continued to heat up by winning its third straight game, a 43-16 victory over the 49ers. Russell Wilson fired four touchdown passes – on just 11 completions – including a 52-yarder to Tyler Lockett … Spurred on by Desmond King's 73-yard punt-return touchdown, the Chargers rallied from a 16-point deficit to upend the Steelers, 33-30, the decisive points coming on Michael Badgley's 29-yard field goal as time expired … Andrew Adams picked off three passes to highlight Tampa Bay's 24-17 victory over Carolina.

WEEK 14

The Colts snapped the Texans' nine-game winning streak, 24-21, to improve to 7-6 and continue their playoff quest. After not recording a first down until the second quarter, Indianapolis erupted for 17 points

Tony Avelar/AP Images

▲ **SOARING IN SEATTLE:** Russell Wilson set career highs for TD passes (35) and passer rating (110.9) in 2018.

BEST IN THE WEST: Travis Kelce's big numbers – 103 catches, 1,336 receiving yards, and 10 TDs – figured into the Chiefs' AFC West title.

Ed Zurga/AP Images

"WE'RE GROWING. WE'RE GETTING STRONGER BY THE WEEK. THIS WILL BE A NEW CHALLENGE FOR US, BUT WE'RE EXCITED AND WE'LL BE READY."

— BEARS COACH MATT NAGY, ON GOING TO THE PLAYOFFS

before the half. Marlon Mack's four-yard TD run put the Colts on the board, Andrew Luck found Eric Ebron on a 14-yard scoring throw, and Adam Vinatieri nailed a 54-yard field goal as the second quarter came to an end. Luck would end up with 399 passing yards, nearly half of those to T.Y. Hilton (9 receptions, 199 yards). "When T.Y.'s in the zone, he's in a zone, man. It's fun to play with him and it's an honor to play with him," said Luck. It was Hilton's franchise-record 11th 150-yard game and he topped 800 receiving yards for the seventh straight season, the longest active streak in the NFL.

▸ **Extra Points:** The Saints erupted for 25 unanswered points, including the go-ahead touchdown on Drew Brees' one-yard run early in the fourth quarter, to beat Tampa Bay, 28-14, and clinch the NFC South title for the second straight year … Kansas City earned an AFC playoff berth by rallying for a 27-24 overtime win against Baltimore … Derrick Henry rushed for 238 yards, the most by an NFL back in six seasons, and scored four times – one of those on a 99-yard run – in the Titans' 30-9 victory over Jacksonville … Aaron Rodgers set the NFL record for most consecutive pass attempts without an interception – a number that would eventually reach 402 – as part of a 21-of-32, two-TD outing in the Packers' 34-20 win over Atlanta … The 49ers' George Kittle caught seven passes for 210 yards, including an 85-yard TD, in a 20-14 win over Denver … Miami stunned the Patriots, 34-33, on the game's final play when a Ryan Tannehill pass to Kenny Stills was lateraled to DeVante Parker and then to Kenyon Drake, who raced to the end zone for a 69-yard touchdown.

NEXT GEN GEM

Jarvis Landry's 63-yard pass to Breshad Perriman in Cleveland's Week 16 win over Cincinnati traveled 56.2 yards in air distance, the most air distance on any attempted pass by a non-QB since 2016.

WEEK 15

With their win at Kansas City, the Chargers locked down a playoff berth and threw the AFC West title race into disarray. QB Philip Rivers orchestrated two touchdown drives in the final four minutes, capped by a two-point conversion that produced a 29-28 win and put both teams at 11-3. Justin Jackson drew Los Angeles close with his three-yard scoring run, and after the Chargers' defense forced a punt, Rivers directed an eight-play drive that he finished off with a one-yard TD throw to Mike Williams with just four seconds remaining. Still trailing by a point, the Chargers opted to go for the victory, and Rivers hit Williams again for the two-point conversion. "We didn't come here to tie. We came here to win. So, to me, it was a no-brainer," Chargers coach Anthony Lynn said. The gutsy call marked the first time since the 2002 season that a team won a game with a two-point conversion in the final 10 seconds of regulation.

▸ **Figuring Out 15:** Mitchell Trubisky threw a tie-breaking 13-yard TD pass to Trey Burton, keying the Bears' 24-17 victory over Green Bay that earned Chicago its first NFC North title since 2010 … Nick Foles threw for 270 yards and Wendell Smallwood rushed for two touchdowns to power the Eagles past the Rams, 30-23 … Julio Jones reached 100 receptions and 1,500 receiving yards on the season as part of Atlanta's 40-14 victory over Arizona … Marlon Mack rushed for 139 yards and a pair of scores in the Colts' 23-0 shutout of Dallas … Antonio Brown and Vance McDonald each caught touchdown passes, and Jaylen Samuels rushed for 142 yards, sending the Steelers past the Patriots, 17-10.

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▲ **PLAYOFF PURSUIT:** Fletcher Cox starred in a 24-0 shutout of Washington that helped the Eagles land an NFC Wild Card berth.

▶ **END GAME:** Titans coach Mike Vrabel (left) talks with the Colts' Frank Reich before their teams' Week 17 clash that closed out the 2018 NFL regular season.

Mark Zaleski/AP Images

WEEK 16

Philadelphia kept its playoff hopes alive by defeating Houston, 32-30, thanks to four TDs and a franchise-record 471 passing yards from Nick Foles, and a last-second 35-yard field goal by Jake Elliott. The Eagles appeared in control after Foles connected with Nelson Agholor on an 83-yard TD and Zach Ertz on a 23-yard scoring pass to lead, 29-16, midway through the fourth quarter. But the Texans scored touchdowns on back-to-back possessions to move ahead with just over two minutes to play, before Foles answered back one final time. "He was great today," said Eagles wide receiver Alshon Jeffery after Foles directed a 72-yard drive to set up the winning kick. "That's just Nick being Nick." Ertz had 12 catches in the victory, including his 111th of the season to break the league single-season record for a tight end.

▶ **Unwrapping the Weekend:** Sony Michel's 116 rushing yards carried the Patriots past the Bills, 24-12, and gave New England its 16th straight 10-win season, tying the 49ers' league record set from 1983-98 … The Saints secured the NFC's top seed with a 31-28 win over Pittsburgh … Russell Wilson fired three TD passes and Chris Carson ran for 116 yards and a pair of scores as the Seahawks secured an NFC Wild Card berth by defeating the Chiefs, 38-31 … The Cowboys took home the NFC East title for the second time in three years, led by Dak Prescott, who threw for one touchdown and ran for another in a 27-20 win over Tampa Bay.

NEXT GEN GEM

Rams defensive tackle **Aaron Donald** not only led the league in sacks with 20.5, his 67 QB pressures were 10 more than any other interior defensive lineman and he averaged the fastest time to sack (3.64 seconds) of any player with at least eight sacks.

WEEK 17

The regular season's final day included plenty of playoff storylines, and also produced some unusual plays: Three non-quarterbacks threw TD passes and two quarterbacks caught them. It brought the season total to 13 scoring passes thrown by non-QBs, the most in the league since 1983. Atlanta wide receiver Mohamed Sanu hit Matt Ryan for a five-yard TD in his team's 34-32 win over Tampa Bay, while Miami wide receiver Kenny Stills connected with Ryan Tannehill from three yards against Buffalo, marking the first time in the Super Bowl era that multiple QBs had a touchdown reception in the same week. Not to be outdone, Lions kicker Matt Prater lofted an eight-yard TD to tight end Levine Toilolo on a fake field goal in what ended up a 31-0 win over the Packers. "Basically I was trying not to screw it up," Prater said. "It worked out, so it was fun." Lions QB Matthew Stafford had his own assessment: "Slow delivery, lollipop, but it was on target, so that was a plus."

▶ **Closing Acts:** The Eagles' 24-0 shutout of Washington, coupled with Chicago's 24-10 victory at Minnesota, catapulted the defending Super Bowl champs into the NFC playoffs. For Philadelphia, Fletcher Cox had three sacks and Nick Foles tied an NFL record with 25 consecutive completions, while the Bears were sparked by a defense that allowed just 12 first downs and 164 total yards … In the AFC, the Colts prevailed in a "win and you're in" showdown against the Titans. Andrew Luck threw for 285 yards and three TDs in the 33-17 victory, completing a turnaround that saw Indianapolis finish 10-6 after losing five of its first six games … Chiefs QB Patrick Mahomes became the third player to throw 50 touchdown passes in a season, firing two TDs in a 35-3 victory over the Raiders … Houston became just the second team to reach the postseason after starting 0-3, with Deshaun Watson throwing for 234 yards and rushing for another 66 in a 20-3 win over Jacksonville that clinched the AFC South.

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SCORES & AWARDS

WEEK 13 / November 29-December 3

DALLAS 13, New Orleans 10
Baltimore 26, ATLANTA 16
Denver 24, CINCINNATI 10
LA Rams 30, DETROIT 16
Arizona 20, GREEN BAY 17
HOUSTON 29, Cleveland 13
JACKSONVILLE 6, Indianapolis 0
MIAMI 21, Buffalo 17
NY GIANTS 30, Chicago 27 (OT)
TAMPA BAY 24, Carolina 17
Kansas City 40, OAKLAND 33
TENNESSEE 26, NY Jets 22
NEW ENGLAND 24, Minnesota 10
SEATTLE 43, San Francisco 16
LA Chargers 33, PITTSBURGH 30
PHILADELPHIA 28, Washington 13

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK
AFC Offense
Phillip Lindsay, RB, Denver
AFC Defense
Xavien Howard, CB, Miami
AFC Special Teams
Desmond King, CB-PR, LA Chargers
NFC Offense
Todd Gurley, RB, LA Rams
NFC Defense
Bobby Wagner, LB, Seattle
NFC Special Teams
Aldrick Rosas, K, NY Giants
Pepsi NFL Rookie
Phillip Lindsay, RB, Denver

WEEK 14 / December 6-10

TENNESSEE 30, Jacksonville 9
NY Jets 27, BUFFALO 23
CLEVELAND 26, Carolina 20
GREEN BAY 34, Atlanta 20
Indianapolis 24, HOUSTON 21
KANSAS CITY 27, Baltimore 24 (OT)
MIAMI 34, New England 33
New Orleans 28, TAMPA BAY 14
NY Giants 40, WASHINGTON 16
LA CHARGERS 26, Cincinnati 21
SAN FRANCISCO 20, Denver 14
Detroit 17, ARIZONA 3
DALLAS 29, Philadelphia 23 (OT)
OAKLAND 24, Pittsburgh 21
CHICAGO 15, LA Rams 6
SEATTLE 21, Minnesota 7

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK
AFC Offense
Derrick Henry, RB, Tennessee
AFC Defense
Denico Autry, DL, Indianapolis
AFC Special Teams
Michael Badgley, K, LA Chargers
NFC Offense
Amari Cooper, WR, Dallas
NFC Defense
Darius Slay, CB, Detroit
NFC Special Teams
Taysom Hill, QB-ST, New Orleans
Pepsi NFL Rookie
Baker Mayfield, QB, Cleveland

WEEK 15 / December 13-17

LA Chargers 29, KANSAS CITY 28
Houston 29, NY JETS 22
Cleveland 17, DENVER 16
ATLANTA 40, Arizona 14
BALTIMORE 20, Tampa Bay 12
BUFFALO 14, Detroit 13
CHICAGO 24, Green Bay 17
CINCINNATI 30, Oakland 16
INDIANAPOLIS 23, Dallas 0
Washington 16, JACKSONVILLE 13
MINNESOTA 41, Miami 17
Tennessee 17, NY GIANTS 0
SAN FRANCISCO 26, Seattle 23 (OT)
PITTSBURGH 17, New England 10
Philadelphia 30, LA RAMS 23
New Orleans 12, CAROLINA 9

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK
AFC Offense
Mike Williams, WR, LA Chargers
AFC Defense
Joe Haden, CB, Pittsburgh
AFC Special Teams
Ka'imi Fairbairn, K, Houston
NFC Offense
Dalvin Cook, RB, Minnesota
NFC Defense
Grady Jarrett, DL, Atlanta
NFC Special Teams
Robbie Gould, K, San Francisco
Pepsi NFL Rookie
Jaylen Samuels, RB, Pittsburgh

WEEK 16 / December 22-24

TENNESSEE 25, Washington 16
Baltimore 22, LA CHARGERS 10
INDIANAPOLIS 28, NY Giants 27
Jacksonville 17, MIAMI 7
Atlanta 24, CAROLINA 10
CLEVELAND 26, Cincinnati 18
DALLAS 27, Tampa Bay 20
Minnesota 27, DETROIT 9
NEW ENGLAND 24, Buffalo 12
Green Bay 44, NY JETS 38 (OT)
PHILADELPHIA 32, Houston 30
LA Rams 31, ARIZONA 9
Chicago 14, SAN FRANCISCO 9
NEW ORLEANS 31, Pittsburgh 28
SEATTLE 38, Kansas City 31
OAKLAND 27, Denver 14

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK
AFC Offense
Baker Mayfield, QB, Cleveland
AFC Defense
Patrick Onwuasor, LB, Baltimore
AFC Special Teams
Dwayne Harris, PR-KR, Oakland
NFC Offense
Nick Foles, QB, Philadelphia
NFC Defense
Aaron Donald, DT, LA Rams
NFC Special Teams
Brett Maher, K, Dallas
Pepsi NFL Rookie
Baker Mayfield, QB, Cleveland

Kevin Terrell/AP Images

▲ **QUITE A CATCH:** The acquisition of Amari Cooper proved pivotal in Dallas' drive to the NFC East title.

WEEK 17 / December 30

BUFFALO 42, Miami 17
Detroit 31, GREEN BAY 0
HOUSTON 20, Jacksonville 3
NEW ENGLAND 38, NY Jets 3
Carolina 33, NEW ORLEANS 14
Dallas 36, NY GIANTS 35
Atlanta 34, TAMPA BAY 32
BALTIMORE 26, Cleveland 24
KANSAS CITY 35, Oakland 3
Chicago 24, MINNESOTA 10
PITTSBURGH 16, Cincinnati 13
Philadelphia 24, WASHINGTON 0
LA Chargers 23, DENVER 9
LA RAMS 48, San Francisco 32
SEATTLE 27, Arizona 24
Indianapolis 33, TENNESSEE 17

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK
AFC Offense
Josh Allen, QB, Buffalo
AFC Defense
Darius Leonard, LB, Indianapolis
AFC Special Teams
Justin Tucker, K, Baltimore
NFC Offense
Blake Jarwin, TE, Dallas
NFC Defense
Fletcher Cox, DT, Philadelphia
NFC Special Teams
Matt Prater, K, Detroit
Pepsi NFL Rookie
Baker Mayfield, QB, Cleveland

AFC WILD CARD

COLTS 21
TEXANS 7

SHOWCASING MORE THAN JUST A LITTLE BIT OF LUCK, THE COLTS GALLOPED AWAY WITH A CONVINCING WIN OVER DIVISION RIVAL HOUSTON.

NRG STADIUM
Houston, Texas Jan. 5, 2019

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Indianapolis	14	7	0	0	21
Houston	0	0	0	7	7

1st Quarter

IND Ebron 6 pass from Luck (Vinatieri kick), 4:28

IND Mack 2 run (Vinatieri kick), 10:57

2nd Quarter

IND Inman 18 pass from Luck (Vinatieri kick), 8:36

4th Quarter

HOU Coutee 6 pass from Watson (Fairbairn kick), 4:03

Indianapolis quarterback Andrew Luck threw for 222 yards and two touchdowns, and running back Marlon Mack set a team playoff rushing record with 148 yards, helping the Colts knock off the AFC South champion Texans, 21-7, at NRG Stadium.

The game brought together two of the league's hottest teams. Indianapolis reached the postseason after a 1-5 start, while Houston claimed the division crown after dropping its first three games.

Making their first playoff appearance since falling to New England in the 2015 AFC title game, the Colts took the opening kickoff and wasted little time getting on the scoreboard. Luck marched his team 75 yards – 63 of those coming on T.Y. Hilton catches – capped by a TD toss to tight end Eric Ebron. After the Texans went three-and-out, Luck engineered another impressive drive, this one covering 74 yards and ending with a two-yard touchdown run from Mack. Just like that, the visitors held a 14-0 lead.

Houston quarterback Deshaun Watson, making his postseason debut, drove his team into Colts territory on the Texans' next possession. But on fourth-and-four from the 45-yard line, cornerback Kenny Moore picked off a pass, ending the threat.

Indy's first drive of the second quarter likewise ended with a pick when nose tackle Brandon Dunn intercepted a short toss intended for Mack, but the Texans' offense was again relegated to a quick three-and-out. Luck then took his team 65 yards in seven plays, the last of those an 18-yard TD strike to Dontrelle Inman that upped the score to 21-0. Although Houston did counter with a nice possession late in the half, reaching to the Colts 9-yard line, that drive, too, ended on downs.

It didn't get any easier for the Texans after intermission. They were held scoreless until early in the fourth quarter, when Watson found Keke Coutee on a six-yard touchdown. It was one of Coutee's 11 catches on the day.

Watson, who threw for 4,165 yards during the regular season, finished 29 of 49 for 235 yards, while the Indy defense limited receiver DeAndre Hopkins, who was second in the NFL with 1,572 receiving yards, to just five catches for 37 yards. Among the reasons for the Colts' stout performance was linebacker Darius Leonard, the league-leader with 163 regular-season tackles, who had 13 in this game.

"The message has always been, 'What are we doing to get better today,'" said Luck, who completed 19 of 32 passes for 222 yards and whose next challenge would be against the AFC West champion Chiefs. "We've focused on getting the most out of each other, getting the most out of ourselves. It's been very fulfilling because we just keep getting better and it's very energizing."

Eric Christian Smith/AP Images

Marlon Mack rushed for a Colts playoff record 148 yards and scored the team's second touchdown on a two-yard run.

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CHARGERS 23
RAVENS 17

LOS ANGELES CONTINUED ITS ROAD-WARRIOR WAYS, UTILIZING A DOMINATING DEFENSE TO UPEND BALTIMORE IN A HIGH-VOLTAGE AFFAIR.

Michael Badgley connected on five field goals, while the Chargers' defense registered seven sacks and forced a trio of turnovers to spark a 23-17 win over the Ravens at M&T Bank Stadium. The impressive result improved Los Angeles' already-impressive road record to 9-1.

The Chargers' defense dominated from the start. It forced three fumbles on Baltimore's first two possessions, the last of those recovered by safety Adrian Phillips that set up Badgley's first field goal. The kicker then converted from 53 yards out to bump the lead to 6-0 at the end of the opening quarter.

Baltimore's offensive struggles continued as a Phillips interception led to Badgley's third field goal of the day. Field goal No. 4 was a 34-yarder as the first half expired, putting Los Angeles ahead, 12-0, at intermission. While the scoreboard told half the story, the stats told the other half: the Chargers yielded just 69 total yards and three first downs over the game's first 30 minutes.

Still, the Ravens' defense was holding its own, keeping quarterback Philip Rivers and the Chargers' potent offense out of the end zone. Baltimore then blocked a Badgley field goal attempt early in the third quarter, and later turned a C.J. Mosley fumble recovery into a 33-yard Justin Tucker field goal that sliced the deficit to 12-3.

In the fourth quarter, Los Angeles finally found paydirt, capping a 10-play drive with the game's first touchdown: a one-yard Melvin Gordon run. A successful two-point conversion increased the Bolts' lead to 20-3, and Badgley's fifth field goal extended the margin to what seemed to be an insurmountable 20 points.

From there, though, the Ravens got on track. Lamar Jackson, who at age 21 became the youngest quarterback to start an NFL postseason game, twice connected on scoring tosses to Michael Crabtree, chopping the Chargers' lead to 23-17 and giving Baltimore hope. But with just 19 seconds remaining, Los Angeles linebacker Uchenna Nwosu strip-sacked Jackson, and defensive end Melvin Ingram recovered the loose ball to end the threat.

Rivers was efficient in victory, completing 22 of 32 passes for 160 yards while connecting with nine different receivers. The win earned the Chargers a date with New England in the Divisional round, the first postseason meeting between the teams since the Patriots prevailed in the 2007 AFC Championship Game.

"Is it special to go to New England, to go against a Hall of Fame coach and arguably the best quarterback ever to play?," asked Rivers of the pending matchup. "Am I excited to get another shot at them? Heck, yeah, it's special. I'm looking forward to it."

M&T BANK STADIUM
Baltimore, Md. Jan. 6, 2019

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
L.A. Chargers	6	6	0	11	23
Baltimore	0	0	3	14	17

1st Quarter
LAC Badgley 21 FG, 7:57
LAC Badgley 53 FG, 13:46

2nd Quarter
LAC Badgley 40 FG, 11:34
LAC Badgley 34 FG, 14:56

3rd Quarter
BAL Tucker 33 FG, 6:26

4th Quarter
LAC Gordon 1 run (Williams pass from Rivers), 0:16
LAC Badgley 47 FG, 5:46
BAL Crabtree 31 pass from Jackson (Tucker kick), 8:27
BAL Crabtree 7 pass from Jackson (Tucker kick), 13:01

Nick Wass/AP Images

Melvin Ingram (left) was the catalyst for the Chargers' superb defensive effort with seven tackles and two sacks.

NFC
WILD CARD

COWBOYS 24
SEAHAWKS 22

WITH A DOMINANT RUNNING GAME AND A STIFLING DEFENSE, THE COWBOYS GROUNDED THE SEAHAWKS AND EARNED THEIR FIRST PLAYOFF WIN IN FOUR YEARS.

AT&T STADIUM
Arlington, Texas Jan. 5, 2019

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Seattle	0	6	8	8	22
Dallas	3	7	0	14	24

1st Quarter
DAL Maher 39 FG, 5:06

2nd Quarter
SEA Janikowski 27 FG, 7:55
SEA Janikowski 42 FG, 13:13
DAL Gallup 11 pass from Prescott (Maher kick), 14:36

3rd Quarter
SEA Wilson 4 run (Davis run), 13:01

4th Quarter
DAL Elliott 1 run (Maher kick), 2:32
DAL Prescott 1 run (Maher kick), 12:52
SEA McKissic 7 pass from Wilson (Carson run), 13:42

Dallas running back Ezekiel Elliott carried the ball 26 times for 137 yards and a touchdown, while the Cowboys' defense shut down Seattle's league-best rushing attack to secure a thrilling 24-22 win at AT&T Stadium. The Seahawks, who led the NFL in rushing with an average of 160 yards per game, could muster only 73 in this contest.

In a game that saw four lead changes, Dallas' advantage in running the ball and stopping the run made all the difference, as the Cowboys collected 23 first downs to Seattle's 11, and ran 68 plays on offense to the Seahawks' 52. In time of possession, Dallas held a nearly 10-minute advantage.

A 39-yard Brett Maher field goal gave the NFC East champs an early 3-0 lead, before Seattle's Sebastian Janikowski answered back twice, hitting from 27 and 42 yards to put the visitors ahead, 6-3. But Dallas regained the upper hand with a quick, seven-play drive – highlighted by a 44-yard Elliott run – that ended when QB Dak Prescott connected with Michael Gallup for a touchdown that moved the hosts in front, 10-6, at halftime.

Michael Ainsworth/AP Images

Dak Prescott shined in earning his first playoff victory, throwing for 226 yards and a touchdown and running for another score.

The game swung back Seattle's way late in the third quarter, when Russell Wilson capped a 44-yard drive with a four-yard scamper. A successful two-point conversion made the score 14-10 in favor of the Seahawks.

But Prescott and Elliott took control over the final 15 minutes, turning that four-point deficit into a 10-point lead as each ran for one-yard scores. The second drive – a surgical 11-play beauty that took 5:12 off the clock and included a key third-and-14 conversion from the Seattle 17 – saw Elliott rush five times for 31 yards.

Meanwhile, the Cowboys' swarming defense allowed just two third-down conversions in 13 attempts. Still, the Seahawks made things interesting down the stretch, scoring with 1:22 left on a Wilson-to- J.D. McKissic TD pass. But the ensuing onside kick was unsuccessful, allowing Dallas to run out the clock for a win that set up a Divisional Playoff matchup with the NFC West champion Rams.

"It's really just a chance to keep going on, simple as that," Prescott said of his first career postseason win, in which he completed 22 of 33 passes for 226 yards. "Me and this whole team, we want to win it all. You can't do that without taking care of the first one. A lot of excitement, but my goal is bigger than just one playoff win."

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EAGLES 16
BEARS 15

WILD CARD WEEKEND CONCLUDED WITH THE EAGLES BEATING THE BEARS – WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM THE GOALPOST – IN A DOWNRIGHT THRILLING CONTEST.

In a back-and-forth battle that kept fans at Soldier Field on the edge of their seats, Philadelphia came up with two big plays in the final minute to fly out of the Windy City with a 16-15 victory. First, QB Nick Foles connected with Golden Tate on a two-yard touchdown pass on fourth down that put the Eagles ahead; Treyvon Hester then blocked a last-chance Bears 43-yard field goal attempt that hit the left upright and the crossbar before bouncing back on the field.

Philadelphia made the game's first move, driving 50 yards in 10 plays on its opening possession to set up Jake Elliott's 43-yard field goal for a 3-0 lead. Early in the second quarter, the Bears drew even when linebacker Roquan Smith snared an interception that led to a Cody Parkey field goal.

Chicago safety Adrian Amos saw that the score remained that way with an end zone interception to halt the Eagles' next drive, and late in the quarter, Parkey hit from 29 yards out to send the hosts into the locker room with a 6-3 halftime lead.

Foles found his feet on Philadelphia's first possession after intermission, engineering a seven-play, 83-yard march that culminated with a 10-yard toss to tight end Dallas Goedert that put the Eagles back in front. In the fourth quarter, the Bears bounced back, getting a third Parkey field goal and a Mitchell Trubisky TD pass to Allen Robinson to take a 15-10 lead.

But Foles has become synonymous with playoff magic, and that was on display again when Philly took possession with just 4:48 remaining. He directed a gutsy 12-play, 60-yard drive, completing six of nine passes, the last of those to Tate on a rollout to the right for the go-ahead score.

"He just came in the huddle calm, cool, and collected, ol' cool Nick," said Tate. "He called the play. We kind of looked at each other and the next thing you know, the ball was on its way and I had an opportunity to make a play."

Philadelphia came up short on the two-point conversion and its one-point lead looked tenuous when Trubisky, who finished with 303 passing yards, hit Robinson twice to position Chicago for a potential game-winning field goal. The Eagles iced Parkey just before his first attempt (which would have been good) and his second kick was tipped at the line of scrimmage by a leaping Hester, sending the ball offline. Moments later, the Eagles were off to New Orleans for a Divisional Playoff meeting with the NFC South champion Saints.

"I'm blessed to wear this uniform at least one more week," said Foles, who finished 25 of 40 for 266 yards and two touchdowns. "I get to play with these guys one more week and be with these coaches one more week. That's something I look forward to."

SOLDIER FIELD
Chicago, Ill. Jan. 6, 2019

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Philadelphia	3	0	7	6	16
Chicago	0	6	0	9	15

1st Quarter
PHI Elliott 43 FG, 5:23

2nd Quarter
CHI Parkey 36 FG, 5:18
CHI Parkey 29 FG, 14:57

3rd Quarter
PHI Goedert 10 pass from Foles (Elliott kick), 9:40

4th Quarter
CHI Parkey 34 FG, 0:43
CHI Robinson 22 pass from Trubisky (pass failed), 5:56
PHI Tate 2 pass from Foles (run failed), 14:04

Nam Y. Huh/AP Images

Nick Foles stared down the Bears' tough defense to carry the Eagles to victory.

AFC DIVISIONAL

CHIEFS 31
COLTS 13

QUICK STRIKES ON OFFENSE AND A SUDDENLY STOUT DEFENSE LED KANSAS CITY TO A DOMINANT WIN OVER THE VISITING COLTS.

THE AFC'S TOP-SEEDED CHIEFS owned both sides of the ball in this clash with the sixth-seeded Colts, racing off to a quick start and never looking back, as they rolled to a 31-13 win at snowy Arrowhead Stadium. The regular-season league leader with 50 touchdown passes, Kansas City quarterback Patrick Mahomes did not have a TD toss on the day, but managed a brilliantly balanced attack. The Chiefs' rushers added 180 yards on the ground.

Just as impressive was KC's defense, which finished 31st in the league in yards allowed per game but stifled the Colts' potent offense, limiting quarterback Andrew Luck to 203 yards passing and running back Marlon Mack to just 46 yards rushing. Even more impressive, Indianapolis – the best team in the NFL this season on third down – failed to convert any of its nine attempts.

Mahomes led scoring drives of 90 and 70 yards on Kansas City's first two possessions. A Harrison Butker field goal made the score 17-0 before Indianapolis finally got on the board in the second quarter when Zach Pascal recovered a blocked Dustin Colquitt punt in the end zone. Mahomes' four-yard touchdown run increased the Chiefs' lead to 24-7 at the half.

After a scoreless third, Luck connected with T.Y. Hilton on a 29-yard TD pass, but veteran kicker Adam Vinatieri missed the extra point, his first failed PAT in 71 career playoff attempts. Darrel Williams' six-yard touchdown run then iced the 31-13 win, Kansas City's first home playoff victory since 1993, setting the stage for the first AFC title game ever played at Arrowhead Stadium.

"We get the opportunity to play here again next week, so we're excited for that," Mahomes said afterward. "These fans, we feed off the energy they bring every week. You feel it as soon as you step into this stadium, and it's a real opportunity to get to play in front of these fans."

ARROWHEAD STADIUM
Kansas City, Mo. Jan. 12, 2019

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Indianapolis	0	7	0	6	13
Kansas City	14	10	0	7	31

1st Quarter
- KC Dam. Williams 10 run (Butker kick), 4:55
- KC Hill 36 run (Butker kick), 8:32

2nd Quarter
- KC Butker 39 FG, 2:47
- IND Pascal blocked punt recovery in end zone (Vinatieri kick), 9:04
- KC Mahomes 4 run (Butker kick), 13:20

4th Quarter
- IND Hilton 29 pass from Luck (kick failed), 9:29
- KC Dar. Williams 6 run (Butker kick), 12:37

Tyreek Hill

PATRIOTS 41
CHARGERS 28

THE PATRIOTS TURNED UP THE VOLTAGE EARLY TO SHORT-CIRCUIT THE CHARGERS AND REACH AN EIGHTH STRAIGHT AFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME.

TOM BRADY AND THE AFC EAST champion Patriots staged an impressive display of offensive fireworks in halting the Chargers, 41-28, at Gillette Stadium. Brady, playing in his NFL-record 38th postseason game, was 34 of 44 for 343 yards and a touchdown, completing passes to seven different receivers. It was the 15th time in his career that he passed for more than 300 yards in the playoffs – another NFL record.

Rookie running back Sony Michel scored three touchdowns, all in the first half, as part of his 129 yards rushing, and James White tied an NFL postseason record with 15 catches. That offensive wave proved too much for Los Angeles, which lost on the road for just the second time this season.

New England dominated the first half, building a 35-7 lead – a 43-yard Philip Rivers-to-Keenan Allen TD strike accounting for the Chargers' only first-half points. That play tied the game at 7, before the Patriots – and Michel – ran away from the visitors. Brady connected with Phillip Dorsett for another score, and Rex Burkhead added a TD rush.

A Stephen Gostkowski field goal increased the Pats' lead midway through the third quarter, before the Chargers' Melvin Gordon rushed for a touchdown that made it 38-14. A second Gostkowski field goal was followed by two late TD tosses from Rivers – first to Virgil Green and then Antonio Gates. But those two scores proved indeed too late, as New England earned a trip to Kansas City to play in its record eighth consecutive AFC Championship Game.

Rivers was 25 of 51 for 331 yards, three TDs, and an interception, with Tyrell Williams (5 receptions, 94 yards) his favorite target. Julian Edelman led the Patriots with 151 yards, on nine receptions

"A lot of contributions from a lot of guys today, and that's what it takes to win these games," Brady said. "Kansas City has had a helluva year, they gave us all we could handle [earlier this season], and I'm sure it will be the same. It's going to be a lot of fun to go there and play in a championship game and try to advance."

Sony Michel

GILLETTE STADIUM
Foxborough, Mass. Jan. 13, 2019

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
L.A. Chargers	7	0	7	14	28
New England	14	21	3	3	41

1st Quarter
- NE Michel 1 run (Gostkowski kick), 6:11
- LAC Allen 43 pass from Rivers (Badgley kick), 11:04
- NE Michel 14 run (Gostkowski kick), 13:25

2nd Quarter
- NE Dorsett 15 pass from Brady (Gostkowski kick), 2:43
- NE Burkhead 6 run (Gostkowski kick), 8:56
- NE Michel 5 run (Gostkowski kick), 13:17

3rd Quarter
- NE Gostkowski 28 FG, 8:29
- LAC Gordon 1 run (Badgley kick), 13:44

4th Quarter
- NE Gostkowski 30 FG, 2:37
- LAC Green 1 pass from Rivers (Allen pass from Rivers), 7:22
- LAC Gates 8 pass from Rivers (pass failed), 14:01

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RAMS 30
COWBOYS 22

LOS ANGELES DASHED DALLAS' DREAMS WITH A RELENTLESS RUNNING GAME TO MOVE ONE STEP CLOSER TO THE SUPER BOWL.

C.J. ANDERSON RUSHED for 123 yards and two touchdowns, and Todd Gurley added 115 yards and a TD as the Rams set a franchise playoff record with 273 yards rushing in corralling the Cowboys, 30-22, at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum for their first playoff victory in 14 years.

The second-seeded Rams, who led the NFC this year in total offense and were second in rushing yards per game, utilized their dynamic backfield duo to not only rack up yards but also eat up clock. In the end, the victors also won time of possession by nearly 13 minutes.

Dallas held a 7-3 lead at the end of the first quarter, but the Rams scored 17 straight points in the second, as Greg Zuerlein booted a 23-yard field goal and Anderson and Gurley ran for touchdowns, giving Los Angeles a 20-7 edge at intermission. Another Zuerlein field goal tacked three more points onto that lead, before Dallas' Ezekiel Elliott ran for a score. A successful two-point conversion made it 23-15.

On the Rams' first possession of the fourth, QB Jared Goff engineered a 12-play, 65-yard drive, capped by Anderson's second TD run to give the hosts breathing room. With just over two minutes to play, Cowboys QB Dak Prescott scored on a short run, accounting for the final.

Goff finished 15 of 28 for 186 yards in his first postseason win, while Prescott was 20 of 32 for 266 yards and a TD. In contrast to the Rams' remarkable rushing numbers, Elliott, the league's leading rusher during the regular season, was held to just 47 yards on 20 carries.

"We move on; it feels good," said Goff afterward. "We've guaranteed ourselves a spot in the final four and it's exciting. You dream of these moments all year – to play well and come out on top. Hopefully we've got a couple more."

LOS ANGELES MEMORIAL COLISEUM
Los Angeles, Calif. Jan. 12, 2019

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Dallas	7	0	8	7	22
L.A. Rams	3	17	3	7	30

1st Quarter
- LAR Zuerlein 25 FG, 5:13
- DAL Cooper 29 pass from Prescott (Maher kick), 8:57

2nd Quarter
- LAR Zuerlein 23 FG, 1:20
- LAR Anderson 1 run (Zuerlein kick), 8:00
- LAR Gurley 35 run (Zuerlein kick), 11:33

3rd Quarter
- LAR Zuerlein 44 FG, 4:57
- DAL Eliott 1 run (Cooper pass from Prescott), 9:40

4th Quarter
- LAR Anderson 1 run (Zuerlein kick), 7:44
- DAL Prescott 1 run (Maher kick), 12:49

C.J. Anderson

SAINTS 20
EAGLES 14

A GUTSY CALL AND A GRITTY DRIVE HELPED THE SAINTS GAIN THE MOMENTUM TO KNOCK THE DEFENDING CHAMPS OUT OF THE PLAYOFFS.

DOWN TWO TOUCHDOWNS after the first quarter, the Saints used a daring play-call from head coach Sean Payton, two touchdown passes from quarterback Drew Brees, and two timely interceptions from cornerback Marshon Lattimore to secure a 20-14 comeback win over the Eagles at the Mercedes-Benz Superdome.

The final outcome was far from certain until the final moments, as Brees was picked off by Cre'Von LeBlanc on the Saints' first play from scrimmage. Seven plays later, Nick Foles connected with Jordan Matthews to put Philadelphia up, 7-0. On the Eagles' next possession, Foles capped a 75-yard drive with a one-yard TD run, doubling that lead.

But in the second quarter, Payton's call for a fake punt from his own 30-yard line worked brilliantly, as backup QB Taysom Hill took the snap and turned the gamble into a first down. Brees then marched the Saints to paydirt, connecting with Keith Kirkwood for a TD on a fourth-and-goal from the 2. A Wil Lutz field goal cut Philadelphia's lead to 14-10 at the half.

The Saints' most impressive drive came in the third, as Brees led his team 92 yards in 18 plays, finally connecting with Michael Thomas – who had 12 catches for a franchise playoff-record 171 yards – for the go-ahead score. The drive ate 11:29 off the clock. A second Lutz field goal increased the lead to 20-14, but a late Lutz miss allowed the Eagles a final chance for Foles to work his magic.

After driving to the Saints 27, Foles' next pass slipped through receiver Alshon Jeffery's hands and into the arms of Lattimore, sealing the win for the home team.

"They're a really good football team," said Brees of the Saints' subsequent opponent, the Rams, which New Orleans defeated, 45-35, at home in Week 9. "I had a feeling we'd be seeing these guys again. It should be a great game."

Connecticut-based writer ***Mark Preston*** *wrote the Wild Card and Divisional round wrap-ups for the* Super Bowl LIII Program.

MERCEDES-BENZ SUPERDOME
New Orleans, La. Jan. 13, 2019

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Philadelphia	14	0	0	0	14
New Orleans	0	10	7	3	20

1st Quarter
- PHI Matthews 37 pass from Foles (Elliott kick), 4:19
- PHI Foles 1 run (Elliott kick), 10:23

2nd Quarter
- NO Kirkwood 2 pass from Brees (Lutz kick), 7:37
- NO Lutz 45 FG, 14:54

3rd Quarter
- NO Thomas 2 pass from Brees (Lutz kick), 13:20

4th Quarter
- NO Lutz 39 FG, 4:32

Marshon Lattimore

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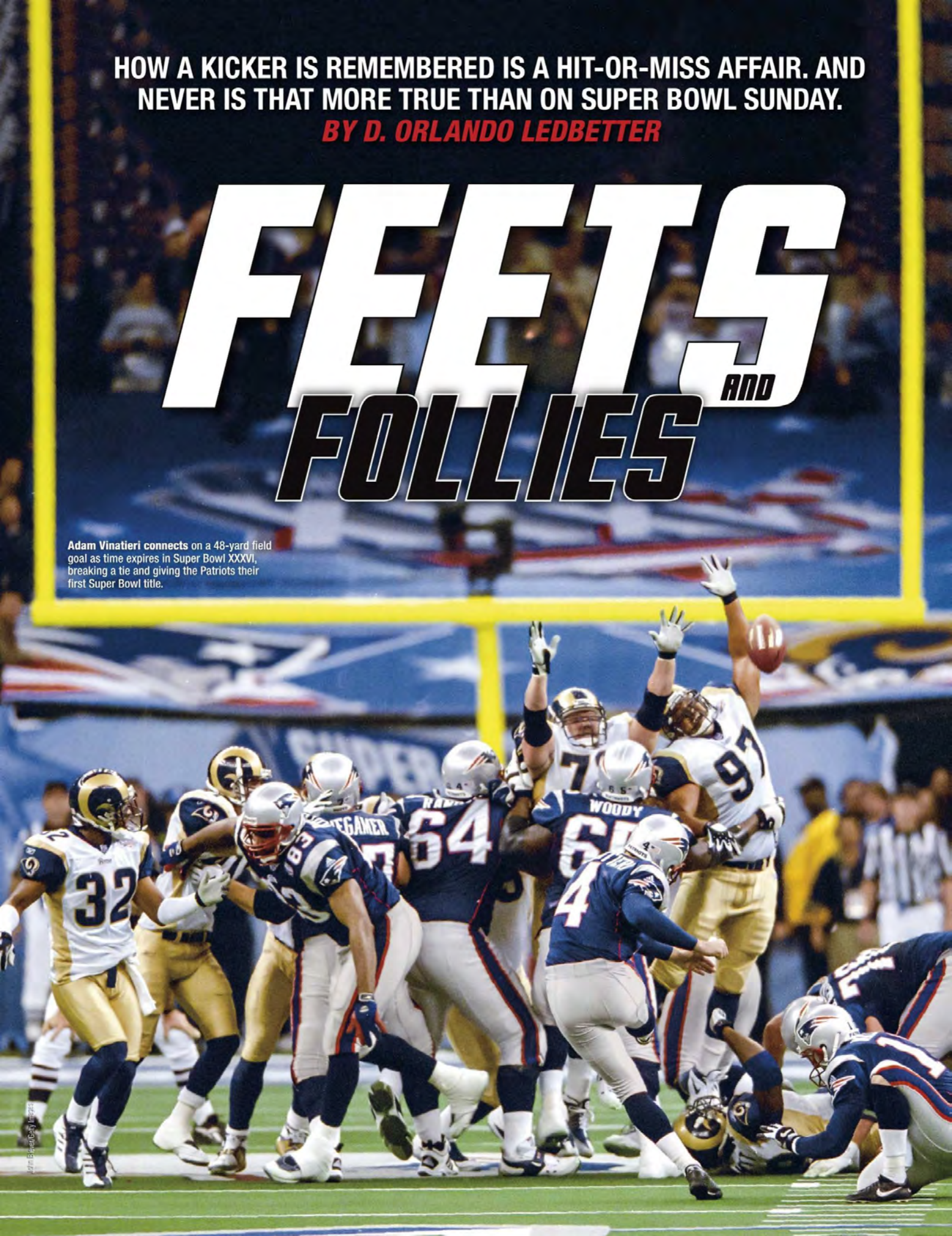
HOW A KICKER IS REMEMBERED IS A HIT-OR-MISS AFFAIR. AND NEVER IS THAT MORE TRUE THAN ON SUPER BOWL SUNDAY.

BY D. ORLANDO LEDBETTER

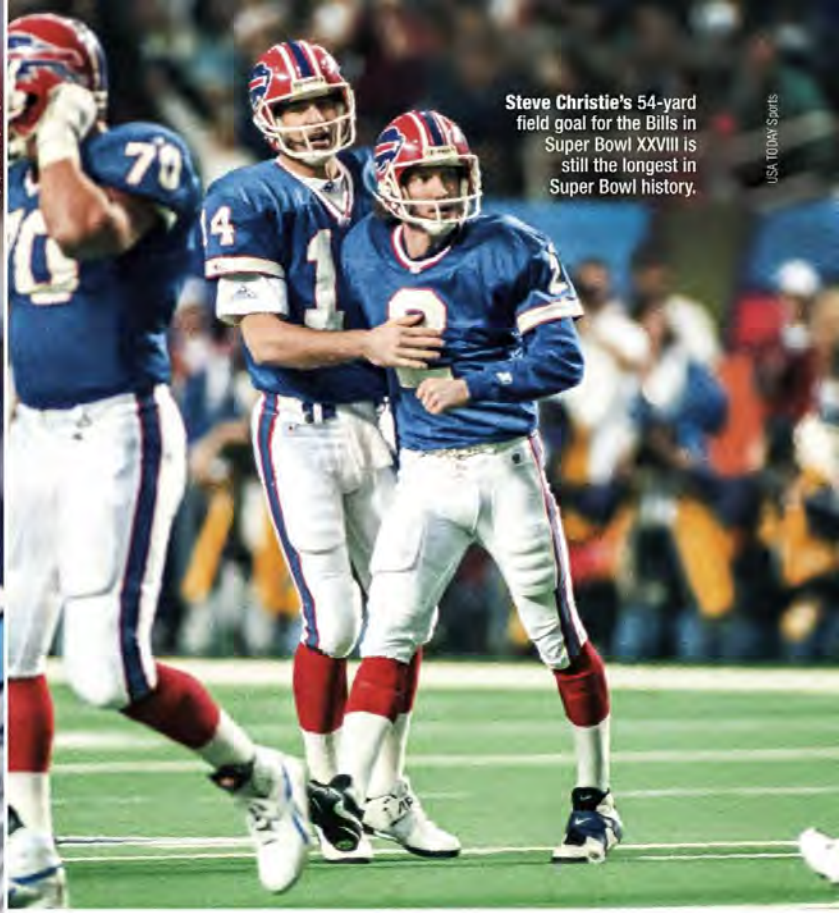
FEETS AND FOLLIES



Adam Vinatieri connects on a 48-yard field goal as time expires in Super Bowl XXXVI, breaking a tie and giving the Patriots their first Super Bowl title.

John Kasay is the most recent player to make a 50-yard field goal in the Super Bowl – a kick that came 15 years ago.

Andy Lyons/Getty Images



Steve Christie's 54-yard field goal for the Bills in Super Bowl XXVIII is still the longest in Super Bowl history.

USA TODAY Sports

KICKING UNDER THE BRIGHT LIGHTS OF THE SUPER BOWL – with a franchise's place in history on the line and millions watching across the globe – is one of the most difficult challenges a specialist will ever face.

Even the game's best can knuckle under the pressure, while success in that moment will cement one's legacy. Jan Stenerud and Adam Vinatieri are testaments to that.

Stenerud, among the wave of soccer-style kickers who began infiltrating pro football in the 1960s, was the unexpected hero of Super Bowl IV. He hit three field goals in the Chiefs' 23-7 win over the Vikings, among them a 48-yarder to start the scoring. Vinatieri, meanwhile, is forever remembered for his tie-breaking field goals in the final seconds of the Patriots' Super Bowl XXXVI and XXXVIII victories.

"You can't get a bigger stage than the Super Bowl," says Vinatieri, who's now appeared on that stage five times. "Those two Super Bowl game-winners are probably my fondest moments in my 23 years of playing."

Vinatieri's seven career Super Bowl field goals are also a record, an achievement that overshadows the fact that even he has had his struggles in the big game. He's missed three Super Bowl field goal attempts, giving him a 70 percent success rate, well below his regular-season accuracy of 84 percent.

That's just the way it goes. Kickers have made 136 of 185 field goal attempts (73.5 percent) in the first 52 Super Bowls, pretty much in line with historical averages over the same period. And while at first glance that looks fine, when you factor in that the league's two best teams are meeting in what are normally pristine conditions, you'd expect the numbers to be markedly better.

What makes it even more interesting is how few long-range field goals are attempted in the Super Bowl. There have been just 12 from 50 yards or more, four of which have been made. That's a 33 percent success rate.

And the last successful kick from that far? It was in Super Bowl XXXVIII – 15 years ago – when Carolina's John Kasay connected from 50 yards out against the Patriots. In fact, there hasn't even been a 50-plus yard attempt since Super Bowl XLV, when Pittsburgh's Shaun Suisham missed from 52 yards against Green Bay.

Need more proof? The record for the Super Bowl's longest field goal, Steve Christie's 54-yarder against Dallas in XXVIII, has stood for 25 years.

Contrast that with what we see in today's NFL. The 2017 regular season averaged more than nine field goal attempts of 50-or-more yards each weekend, with a success rate of 69.5 percent.

So what makes it different? Just like all players, kickers deal with the elevated atmosphere that surrounds the Super Bowl.

"There is media all week long talking to you about what it means to be in this game," Vinatieri says. "It kind of amps up the intensity. So you're just trying to stay on an even keel, stay calm."

Then comes Super Bowl Sunday.

"The day is drawn out," Vinatieri explains. "The pregame is longer. The halftime is longer, but you still try to keep your routine as much the same as you can. Obviously, there are more commercials and all of that stuff. The key is not to overdo it. Keep your body and your mind prepared, but don't kick your leg out."

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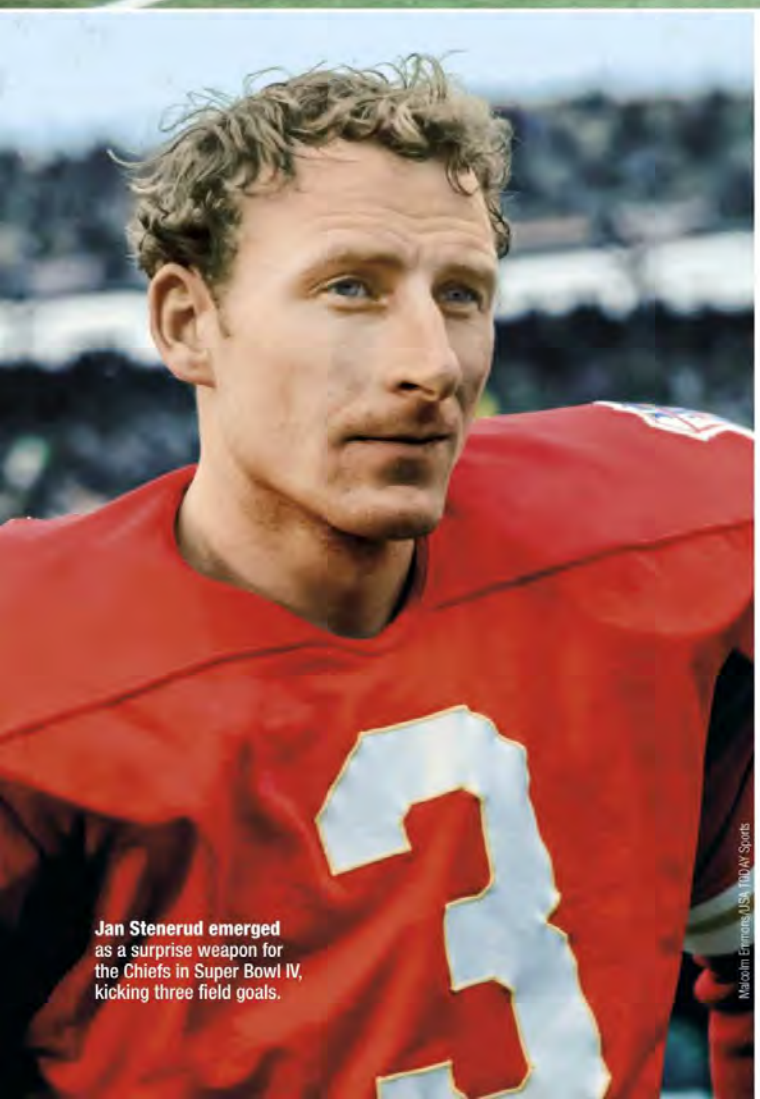
The Colts' Jim O'Brien prepares to kick the game-winning 32-yard field goal in Super Bowl V.

Dick Raphael/Getty Images



Jan Stenerud emerged as a surprise weapon for the Chiefs in Super Bowl IV, kicking three field goals.

Malcolm Emmons/USA TODAY Sports

That three-fold combination of pressure, distraction, and disruption often engulfs kickers. There have been 31 Super Bowls with at least one missed field goal and 13 with at least two. And in the 14 Super Bowls when five or more field goals have been attempted, only twice has there not been at least one misfire, all of which proves there is no such thing as an automatic three points on the season's final day.

At the dawn of the Super Bowl era, field goals were basically a 50-50 proposition. In the Super Bowl itself, the numbers could be even worse: the Jets and the Colts combined to make just three of seven attempts in Super Bowl III.

Stenerud started to change that upon joining the Chiefs in 1967, a fact he dramatically proved in Super Bowl IV. His 48-yarder on Kansas City's first possession more than caught the Vikings off guard.

"They expected us to punt," recalls Len Dawson, the Chiefs' quarterback and game MVP. "They couldn't believe it when Jan came on the field. When he made the kick, they were in shock. They never had to contend with that kind of weapon before."

Stenerud's success gave birth to a new level of respect for the kicking game. In 1970, the Colts selected Jim O'Brien, a wide receiver/kicker from the University of Cincinnati, in the third round of the draft. Barely nine months later, he kicked the game-winning field goal in Super Bowl V, hitting from 32 yards in the final seconds to defeat the Cowboys, 16-13.

"It would have been good from 52 yards out," O'Brien said in *The Ultimate Super Bowl Book* by Bob McGinn. "It was the best kick of my life."

Even with those early milestone moments, there have been numerous kicking hiccups in the Super Bowl. And the misses have proven particularly painful.

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Jake Elliott's 46-yard field goal provided crucial points for the Eagles in their Super Bowl LII victory.

Bruce Hennelgam/USA TODAY Sports

Garo Yepremian's blocked field goal-turned fumble-turned defensive touchdown in Super Bowl VII has not only made its way onto countless blooper reels, it prevented the 17-0 Dolphins from beating Washington by what would have been a poetic 17-0 score. Instead, they had to survive a final Redskins possession to complete their perfect season.

In Super Bowl XXI, the Giants' defense stared across the line of scrimmage as the Broncos, already leading, 10-7, early in the second quarter, had a first-and-goal from the 1-yard line. New York stopped Denver on three straight plays, and the Broncos came up empty when kicker Rich Karlis missed a 23-yard field goal. The Giants seized the momentum to score the next 26 points as they rolled to a 39-20 win.

A dozen years later in Super Bowl XXXIII, Denver was on the other side of a momentum shifter. The Falcons' ultra-reliable Morten Andersen missed a 26-yard field goal midway through the second quarter, and one play later, Broncos QB John Elway connected with Rod Smith on an 80-yard touchdown pass. It opened the floodgates for Denver's 34-19 win.

"The biggest thing from Morten was staying in the moment and letting the past be the past," said former Falcons (and new Buccaneers) special teams coordinator Keith Armstrong. "He was always moving forward. He rarely wanted to talk about bad kicks. He didn't want to hear about them."

On that level, Andersen more than succeeded. The 2017 Pro Football Hall of Fame enshrinee was a seven-time Pro Bowl selection and the league's all-time leading scorer until Vinatieri surpassed him this season.

Sometimes the memories just aren't fair. The Super Bowl's most famous missed kick belongs to the Bills' Scott Norwood, who was wide right on a 47-yard attempt at the end of Super Bowl XXV, but that shouldn't diminish a solid seven-year career that saw him earn First Team All-Pro honors in 1988.

Last year's Super Bowl showcased the best and worst in the kicking game. Both the Patriots' Stephen Gostkowski and the Eagles' Jake Elliott were errant on extra points, but the New England kicker also missed a 26-yard field goal attempt (though it was miraculous that Gostkowski even got off the kick following a low snap and bobble).

Elliott, however, came through in the clutch, hitting a 46-yarder with just over a minute to play that pushed his team's lead to eight points. A miss would have handed the ball to quarterback Tom Brady with plenty of time and the field position for a game-winning drive.

That's the opportunity that presented itself to the Patriots in Super Bowl XXXVI. After the Rams had tied the game, 17-17, on a touchdown with 1:37 remaining, Brady, then in just his second NFL season, completed five passes while swiftly moving his team to the St. Louis 30-yard line. That's where he handed things over to Vinatieri.

"Walking out on that field, I just tried to say, 'Hey, Adam, it's inside of your range,'" Vinatieri recalls of the 48-yard attempt that would give the Patriots their first Super Bowl championship. "'Just kick it normal. Don't think about too much stuff. Just concentrate on your technique.'

"When it left my foot, I looked up and it was going down the middle – exactly where it was supposed to. At that point, it was just sheer celebration and excitement."

D. Orlando Ledbetter *serves as the Atlanta Falcons beat writer for the* Atlanta Journal-Constitution *and is a former president of the Pro Football Writers of America (2013-15).*

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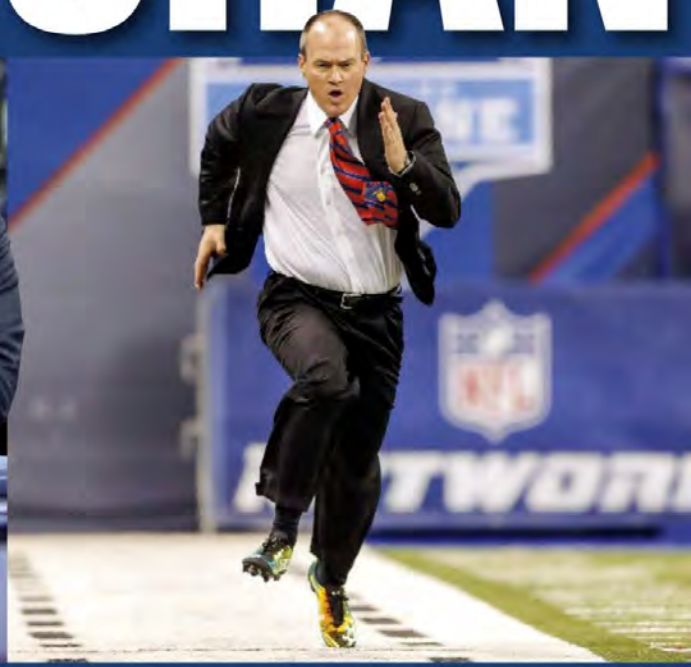
GAME CHAN

NFL NETWORK



WITH THE GROWTH OF NFL NETWORK OVER THE PAST 15 SEASONS, FANS ARE NOW CLOSER TO THE GAME THAN EVER BEFORE.

BY GREGG ROSENTHAL

GERS

Photos on spread: NFL Network

The first NFL Network Super Bowl postgame setup consisted of a few director's chairs on the field. It was February 2004, long before anyone dreamed of an eight-and-a-half-hour pregame show and before the network fielded more on-air Super Bowl talent than the teams' 53-man rosters.

Like so many Super Bowls to follow, the key postgame interview that night in Houston was with Tom Brady. He was so young and unconcerned with branding that he wore a San Francisco Giants hat for the festivities. Brady answered questions in an open, unguarded way that is disarming in retrospect … even when the question from ace anchor Kara Henderson Snead was about Bridget Moynihan, Brady's love interest at the time. It's been a while.

Super Bowl LIII marks the 16th Super Bowl that NFL Network will cover, and its growth over the years coincides with a profound explosion in air time and resources across the sports media landscape. It's strange to think of 2004 as some quaint affair in olden times, but in that era preceding social media, the news cycle slumbered after the morning newspaper landed on the front steps.

And once the Super Bowl ended, the NFL largely retreated to afterthought status until the games started up again, except for a few frenzied days around free agency and the NFL Draft. Now events like the NFL Scouting Combine and the schedule release are calendar tent poles as well, led by NFL Network's coverage, and the network shows more hours of live coverage (13) on an average day of training camp than it showed in the entire week leading up to Super Bowl XXXVIII.

Back in 2004, NFL Network was still trying to get its footing, get in more homes, and get people to notice. Mike Muriano, then a segment producer and now the NFL's VP and executive producer of studio and remote production, remembers how it was a struggle just to fill one hour of programming a day.

Barely two months after its November 2003 launch, a production group that numbered fewer than 20 people put up a Super Bowl Week episode of *NFL Total Access*, the network's flagship show. It was successful beyond their imagination. Former President George H.W. Bush, Brett Favre, and Warren Sapp were among the guests who appeared on set, and Ice Cube told host Rich Eisen that he required NFL Network in all his production trailers.

"That was a day when we thought, 'Wow, do we really have something here?'" Muriano remembers.

Everyone involved during the network's infancy has a story about those humble beginnings. Even with no Sunday programming in its early years, most of the network's staff still showed up at work to watch the games together. Rich Eisen, who has been the face of the network since before it launched, would often bring his dog or occasionally a celebrity friend like actor Paul Rudd. Death Row Records founder Suge Knight once showed up, too, although no one is exactly sure why or how.

"It was only me and Rich at the beginning," Henderson Snead says of the network's host rotation. "It was Rich 99 percent of the time. And then if he went on vacation, I'd come in, even if I was exceedingly pregnant."

Top: *NFL GameDay Morning* was on location for Super Bowl LII in Minneapolis. **Middle:** (Left) John Elway and Rich Eisen talk football at Super Bowl XLVIII Media Day. (Center) Eisen runs the 40-yard dash at the NFL Combine. (Right) The Eagles' Fletcher Cox appears with Deion Sanders on *NFL GameDay Prime* after Super Bowl LII. **Bottom:** (Left) Rob Gronkowski is interviewed by Deion Sanders at the 2010 draft. (Right) NFL Network's Melissa Stark and Nate Burleson pose on the red carpet at *NFL Honors*.

NFL Network struck it big at Super Bowl XXXVIII when *NFL Total Access* landed interviews with (left to right) Jim Nantz, former president George H.W. Bush, and longtime NFL QB Boomer Esiason.

Amy Sancetta/AP Images

NFL NETWORK ... Then and Now

	2003 NFL SEASON	2018 NFL SEASON
Live Hours of Programming Per Week	5	58
On-Air Talent	10	75-plus
Weekly Studio Shows	2	16
Live Hours of Super Bowl Week Coverage	6	85
Games Televised	0	18
NFL Combine Coverage	6 one-hour recap shows	52 live hours
NFL Draft Coverage	Not live until 2006	75-plus live hours

The biggest change happened in 2006, when the network first televised *Thursday Night Football*. Scores of staff were hired overnight. The Culver City, Calif., headquarters built out a newsroom and started taking over the office space around it. And reporters such as Adam Schefter, who broke scoops nightly on *NFL Total Access*, proved the news operation could operate within the league structure.

Late Raiders owner Al Davis famously called Schefter a "false rumor mongerer" in a statement that disputed a report that coach Art Shell would be let go after the 2006 season. Schefter skipped his 40th birthday plans to cover the game in Oakland that weekend. Shell was fired two weeks later.

Current *NFL Total Access* host Lindsay Rhodes notes how she meets so many new co-workers at the start of every NFL season, a necessary influx to support the ballooning hours of live programming. Yet the clearest example of the network's growth can be seen when games *aren't* taking place.

The NFL initially didn't want the network at the Scouting Combine, enjoying the shroud of secrecy that blanketed the annual event in Indianapolis. Even after the Competition Committee approved the cameras at what is now Lucas Oil Stadium, doubts remained whether the "Underwear Olympics" would resonate.

New Raiders general manager Mike Mayock, who for 15 years was an NFL Network draft analyst, understood why. His father, a longtime coach, watched six minutes of offensive line mirroring drills on the first day of coverage and turned the channel off.

"I thought, 'If my own father isn't going to watch, what kind of future are we going to have?'" Mayock remembers.

In the end, more viewers turned the channel on. What started out as just Mayock and host Paul Burmeister speaking for five hours with drills happening behind them has mushroomed into a week-long feast for draft addicts, complete with multiple sets, coaches press conferences, and every 40-yard dash.

Patriots coach Bill Belichick has even stopped by Mayock and Eisen's booth the past two years to laud the production, saying he doesn't miss anything watching it on television. The network even started sending its game producers to Indianapolis because the Combine essentially turned into a game.

This expansion in coverage now extends throughout the offseason. The Senior Bowl's televised late January practices serve as the unofficial start to draft season. Pro Days have gone from largely ignored to live events. Minicamps are covered like training camp. And the NFL Draft is spread over three days, including two in primetime, with cameras in 20 war rooms and recent crowds in Dallas and Philadelphia that have made it feel like the Super Bowl.

"We used to think, 'Once we get past the Super Bowl, we'll start on the draft,'" coordinating producer Andy Gregg says. "Now we start preparing for the draft in July."

Despite all the offseason fireworks, the network's marquee time still comes during Super Bowl Week, where entertainment, sports, and spectacle collide in a way that even former NFL Commissioner Pete Rozelle could not have dreamed of when he positioned the game's primary place in culture. And the biggest day of the biggest week is Super Bowl Sunday, when the network's pregame coverage is built as eight separate one-hour shows, with 32 different voices mixed in.

"We didn't know what we didn't know," *NFL Gameday Morning* coordinating producer Charlie Yook says of the network's first crack at the super-sized show. "Nobody else really does these insanely long preview shows. It's to a point now that it feels like a traveling circus."

The show is mostly built before arriving to the Super Bowl city, then endlessly tinkered with and rehearsed until show time. A producer at a West Coast Super Bowl may start his or her day at 3:30 a.m. on site, then still be there helping out on the field when the confetti falls 16 hours later. That's when the unscripted magic happens, like when Ravens owner Steve Bisciotti essentially promised quarterback Joe Flacco a record-setting contract live on air after his Super Bowl XLVII victory.

It's the apex of a week that can feel one part convention, one part reunion, and one part celebration. It's also the satisfying culmination of a long season, followed by a brief respite before the "circus" packs up and heads to Indianapolis a few weeks later to start all over again.

"You feel more of a sense of ownership of what we are putting out as a product because there's more to own," Rhodes says. "More shows, more content, more people have ownership over a small piece of the pie as the network's grown.

"I'm really proud of what [the network] has become compared to what it was when it started, which was an awesome concept executed by just a handful of people."

***Gregg Rosenthal** has been a writer, podcaster, and analyst for NFL Media since 2012. He previously worked at Rotoworld and ProFootballTalk.*

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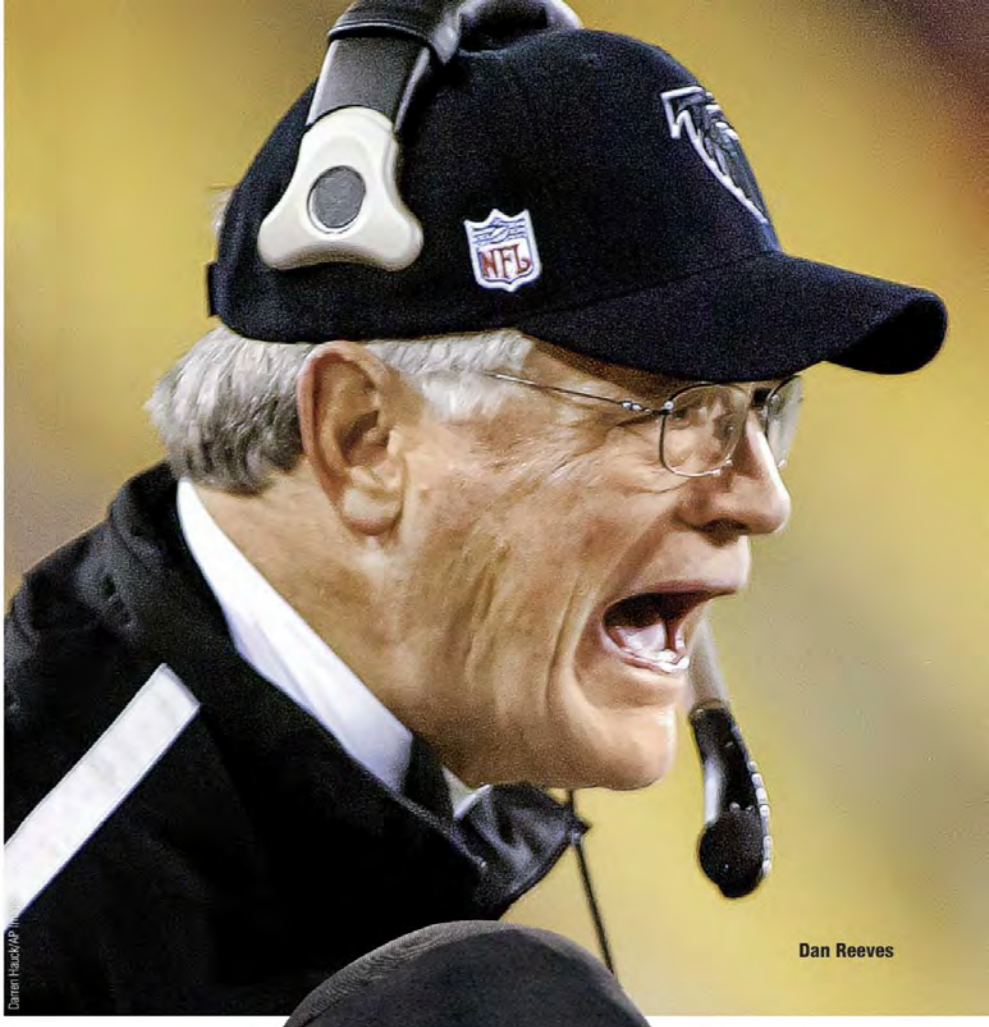
FROM SUPER BOWL STANDOUTS TO GRAPPLING GREATS, THERE'S A SLEW OF STAR ATHLETES WHO HAVE CALLED GEORGIA HOME.

BY TERENCE MOORE

Herschel Walker (34) remains one of the most popular athletes in Georgia, decades after leading the University of Georgia to the national championship and then playing 15 seasons of pro football.

Ronald C. Modra/Getty Images



Darren Hauck/AP

Dan Reeves

Duane Burleson/AP Images

Calvin Johnson

AP Images

TY COBB. MEL BLOUNT. SUGAR RAY LEONARD.

Those names are just enough to tease you for the moment, because the overall number of legendary athletes with a connection to the state of Georgia from their youth is ridiculous. If you don't believe it, listen to this story involving one of the greatest basketball players in history.

Ever hear of Walt Frazier?

With a little imagination, you could envision this guy throwing and completing passes during one of those earlier Super Bowls.

Yeah, THAT Walt Frazier, otherwise known as Clyde, who helped dribble, shoot, and pass the New York Knicks to a couple of NBA titles as their floor leader during the early 1970s. He made seven of the league's All-Star games, he's in the James Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, and he was on the NBA's 50th anniversary all-time team. He's also in the College Basketball Hall of Fame after he became a Division II All-American at Southern Illinois following his graduation in 1963 from a segregated Atlanta High School.

While Frazier is black with that impressive pedigree as an NBA player, Bill Curry is white with the distinction of starting for two Super Bowl winners and an NFL championship team.

"Clyde and I bumped into each other at a nightclub in New York City during the early 1970s, and I told him, 'I think you're the best player in the NBA. I really love watching you play,'" recalls Curry, a fellow Atlanta native, who was a veteran offensive lineman back then for the Baltimore Colts after a stint with Vince Lombardi's Green Bay Packers. "Clyde told me, 'Well, thank you. You know I went to an all-black high school, and I was a much better quarterback than I am an NBA point guard, but nobody offered me a scholarship because of the Jim Crow laws (which kept the races apart in the south).'

"We figured out where we lived, and then we thought about it. We might have played together as football players if it not for Jim Crow."

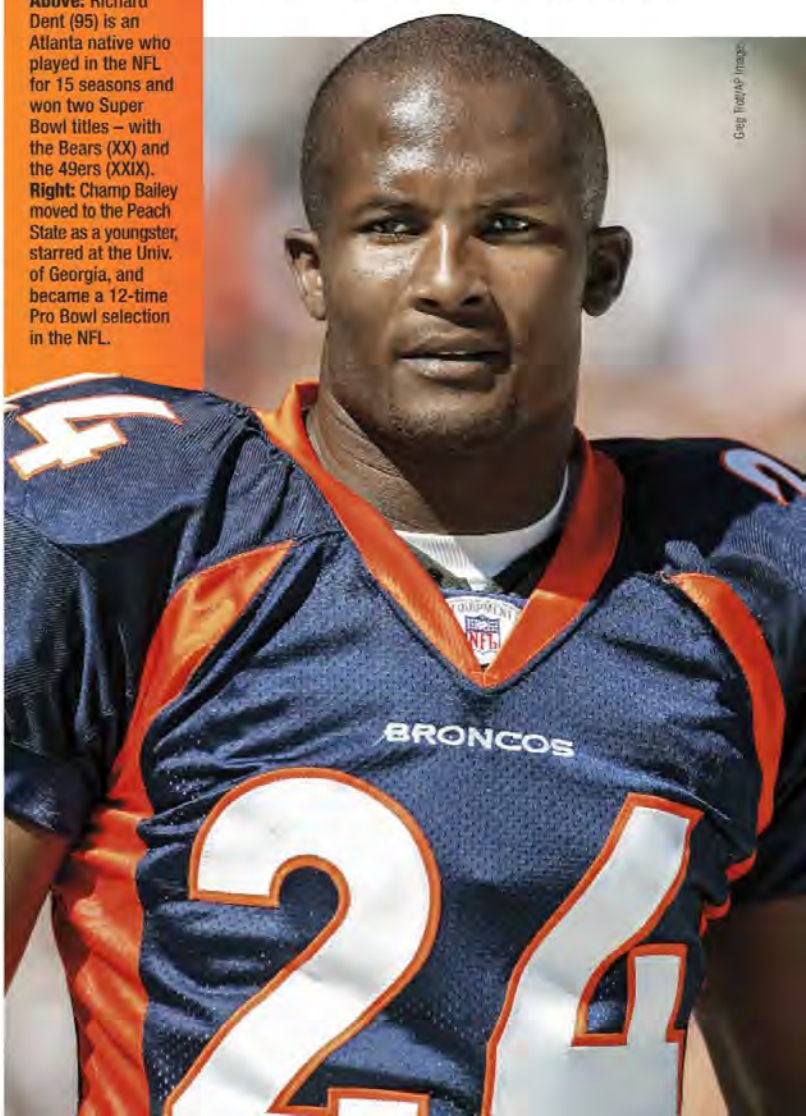
Above: Richard Dent (95) is an Atlanta native who played in the NFL for 15 seasons and won two Super Bowl titles – with the Bears (XX) and the 49ers (XXIX). **Right:** Champ Bailey moved to the Peach State as a youngster, starred at the Univ. of Georgia, and became a 12-time Pro Bowl selection in the NFL.

BOBBY JONES. GEORGE ROGERS. JACKIE ROBINSON.

No offense to those other famous athletes from this state, but let's jump to the top of the list to address the Bulldog in the room, and it isn't Uga X, the English bulldog mascot for the University of Georgia.

Herschel, Herschel, Herschel. Around here, it's always about Herschel Walker, the Wrightsville, Ga., running back turned eternal celebrity. He earned first-name status nearly four decades ago when he became THE Bulldog among Bulldogs after he made University of Georgia football must-see TV with his wonderful speed and bruising style at 6-1 and 225 pounds. So whether Georgians are discussing the elite among athletes, singers, politicians, ministers, actors, or anybody else, Walker remains the king of the state, and nobody else is within several Ray Guy punts.

Guy is from Swainsboro, Ga., by the way, and he's in the Pro Football Hall of Fame. Jim Brown also has a bust in Canton, Ohio, and he was born 152 miles south of Swainsboro in St. Simons, Ga. After Brown turned 8, he left



Greg Trott/AP Images

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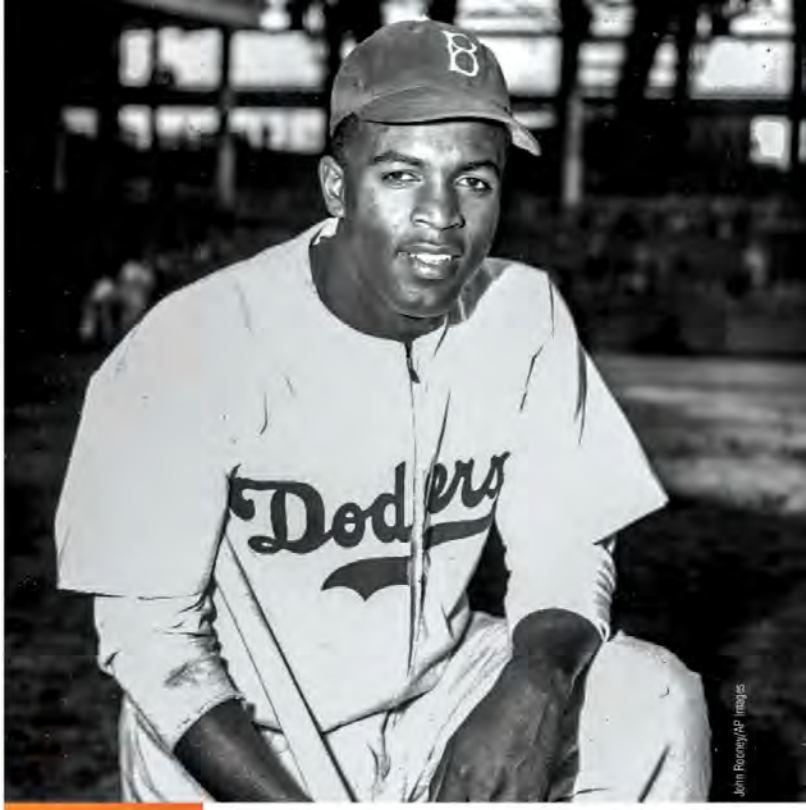
for Manhasset, N.Y., with his mother to build toward his prep career in football, lacrosse, baseball, basketball, and track. He left there to dominate on the field as "that Manhasset running back" (as opposed to any school in St. Simons) at Syracuse and later the Cleveland Browns.

Even so, Curry is among those who still claim Brown as a Georgian when ranking the state's greatest athletes ever.

"Jim Brown is right there. Jim Brown or Jim Parker (a Pro Football Hall of Fame offensive lineman from Macon, Ga.), or Herschel," says Curry, who was a head coach for 22 seasons, starting at Georgia Tech, his alma mater, before going to Alabama, Kentucky, and Georgia State. When you combine that part of Curry's résumé with his lineman days at Georgia Tech and for high-level NFL teams, he's seen enough Georgia icons to say: "I don't know how you pick the greatest from those three I just named, but Herschel is Herschel."

Walker didn't face the same racial issues that Frazier did as a black athlete growing up in Georgia. You can attribute that to timing. He was born in 1962, 17 years after Frazier, when Congress was two years shy of passing the Civil Rights Act and three from approving the Voting Rights Act. Soon after Walker became one of seven children of his working-class parents in Augusta, Ga., the home of the Masters golf tournament, they moved to Wrightsville, where high school coaches ignored his skin color during the late 1970s and concentrated on his ability to do everything. He was a track and basketball standout and graduated as valedictorian. Oh, and he played football, too. He finished his senior year rushing for 3,167 yards on the way to pushing Johnson County High School to its first state championship.

Then Walker left to electrify the University of Georgia and the whole state by evolving into one of the biggest stars in college football history. He ran past, through, and over people, and he did a bunch of other amazing things. Along the way, he became the most cherished athlete forever for this state after he carried the Bulldogs across his jumbo-sized back to the 1980 national championship, the second in school history.



John Rooney/AP Images

Above: Jackie Robinson, who broke Major League Baseball's color barrier in 1947, was born in Cairo, Georgia. **Below:** Pro Football Hall of Famer Jim Brown called St. Simons Island, Georgia, home before his family moved to New York.

Getty Images

WILLIE GAULT. FRANK THOMAS. GWEN TORRENCE.

What's caused this overwhelming athletic success for so many Georgians, either by birth within the state lines or through the spending of their formative years around towering pine trees?

Perhaps it's the red clay.

"No, I don't think it's that, and I don't think it's in the water. I just think kids in Georgia work hard," says Walker, after shaking hands and signing autographs every few yards during one of the many trips he takes each year from his Dallas residence to Athens, Ga., home of the University of Georgia. "I wasn't born with a silver spoon in my mouth. I grew up in the country, where I had to bale hay. I had to work, and you see a lot of Georgia kids having to do that. So I think this is what happens around here. You always think about being that hungry person that you were when you were a little kid."

That's "hungry," as in Georgia youth always wishing to improve their athletic plight, says Walker, who after leaving the Bulldogs played three years in the United States Football League and then a dozen seasons in the NFL. Even though he never reached Canton, his talent and personality made him a bona-fide superstar.

JOIN THE A LIST

LSUA

LSU *of* ALEXANDRIA

Among Walker's NFL stops was New York for one season in 1995 with the Giants, where the head coach was Dan Reeves, an Americus, Ga., native who had been a solid running back for Tom Landry's Dallas Cowboys during the 1960s. After Reeves' playing career, he became an NFL assistant coach before a 23-year stretch as a head coach that included four trips to the Super Bowl (three with the Broncos, one with the Falcons).

"When I coached up there in New York with Herschel, I mean, you're talking about somebody who would volunteer for everything. It was like, 'I can do that, coach. I'll cover the punt, and I'll handle kickoff coverage,'" Reeves says, laughing, reflecting on the guy who embraced bobsledding and mixed martial arts after his football career. "What a great guy. You can't help but admire Herschel Walker for what he accomplished and for how great he was. But what impressed me more than anything was how humble he was."

Hulkamania got its start in Augusta, Georgia, the birthplace of Hulk Hogan.

Jason DeCrow/AP Images

TERESA EDWARDS. RICHARD DENT. CALVIN JOHNSON. With so many Georgians out there in the sports world, they're bound to run into each other from time to time. When they do, Reeves said they have instant chemistry, and then he thought about something else. They occasionally bond in ways they couldn't have imagined.

Take Reeves' first NFL head coaching job.

"When I went for the interview with [former Broncos owner Edgar Kaiser Jr., in 1981], he had just bought the team. I asked him, 'Why did you pick me to interview?' and he said, 'Fran Tarkenton,'" Reeves recalls, referring to the Pro Football Hall of Fame quarterback who was born in Virginia but who went to high school in Athens, Ga., before attending the University of Georgia.

"And I said, 'Gosh, I know Fran, but I never coached with Fran or anything.' Then the owner said to me, 'Well, I was talking to Fran, and he said if he owned a football team, he would hire Dan Reeves.'

"So I called Fran, and I said, 'Thanks, but we've never coached together. Why me?' He said, 'I know you coached under Coach Landry, and I've always admired how you handle yourself, and you played the game, and you know what it takes.'"

Just guessing: It also didn't hurt from Tarkenton's perspective that Reeves spoke with a Georgian drawl.

Super Bowl XL MVP Hines Ward starred at Forest Park High School and the University of Georgia before making 1,000 career receptions in the NFL.

Matt Slocum/AP Images

HINES WARD. DWIGHT HOWARD. RAYFIELD WRIGHT. We're back to Herschel, Herschel, Herschel, who now has a couple of huge passions inside of his post-football world. For one, he owns a national food service company with headquarters in Arkansas and Georgia. For another, he prides himself in teaching youth throughout Georgia and elsewhere on how to handle life, both inside and outside of athletics.

"Like I always tell the young people I come in contact with: 'If you see it, you can achieve it,' and then they know they can do it," Walker says. "It's also what I tell kids all the time, 'There is no difference between me and you, but you've got to work at it. You've got to do it.'

"I remember guys like Chuck Kinnebrew and Horace King (among the University of Georgia's first class of black players in 1971). These guys were the pioneers. They played when it was tough to play at Georgia, and they did some great things back then, so why wouldn't it be easy for me to do what I did after them?

"Since I played, it now makes it nice and easy for some of these current guys at Georgia to do what they're doing. I want them to do that for the future guys, so it'll make it easier for them."

In case you're wondering, Walker's sports heroes as a youth in Wrightsville didn't dress for the Bulldogs. Neither were they in the professional ranks for the Atlanta teams (Falcons, Braves, and Hawks) or on the dark side of the earth at Georgia Tech, the archrival for the University of Georgia. Walker bursts into a smile, and then says, "I didn't watch that many sports growing up. I was into wrestling, and I knew more wrestlers than I knew football players. I can go back to Archie Baker, Thunderbolt Patterson, Mr. Wrestling No. 1 and No. 2."

Walker forgot to mention Hulk Hogan.

Another Georgia guy.

***Terence Moore** is a contributing columnist to forbes.com, cnn.com, and ESPN's theundefeated.com, and has his own website at tmooresports.com. He also is a sports contributor to MSNBC and CNN.*

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NFL PLAY FOOTBALL

ON THE HORIZON

Saquon Barkley

Darron Cummings/AP Images

FEB. 26 – MARCH 4
NFL SCOUTING COMBINE
nfl.com/combine

In preparation for the upcoming draft, more than 300 top pro prospects will attend the NFL Scouting Combine at Indianapolis' Lucas Oil Stadium. NFL Network will be there for it all, providing exclusive and extensive live coverage each day with player workouts, expert analysis, and interviews with participants, coaches, and team officials.

Bears head coach **Matt Nagy**

MID-JULY
TRAINING CAMP/PRESEASON
nfl.com/trainingcamp

Training camp is where NFL teams start their pursuit of a Super Bowl title. As camps unfold and teams narrow down to their 53-man rosters, NFL.com and NFL Network will provide analysis and insights from around the league. NFL Network also will televise every preseason game, including more than a dozen games live.

Eric Gay/AP Images

APRIL 25-27
NFL DRAFT
nfl.com/draft

Find out where the next generation of NFL stars will be playing when the 84th annual NFL Draft takes place in Nashville – with a fan-focused celebration stretching from Lower Broadway to Nissan Stadium. NFL Network, ESPN/ESPN2, and ABC will provide live coverage, starting with Round 1 in primetime on Thursday, April 25. Last year, the Cleveland Browns selected University of Oklahoma quarterback Baker Mayfield with the No. 1 overall pick.

2019 NFL DRAFT ORDER

1. Arizona Cardinals
2. San Francisco 49ers
3. New York Jets
4. Oakland Raiders
5. Tampa Bay Buccaneers
6. New York Giants
7. Jacksonville Jaguars
8. Detroit Lions
9. Buffalo Bills
10. Denver Broncos
11. Cincinnati Bengals
12. Green Bay Packers
13. Miami Dolphins
14. Atlanta Falcons
15. Washington Redskins
16. Carolina Panthers
17. Cleveland Browns
18. Minnesota Vikings
19. Tennessee Titans
20. Pittsburgh Steelers
21. Seattle Seahawks
22. Baltimore Ravens
23. Houston Texans
24. Oakland Raiders+
25. Philadelphia Eagles
26. Indianapolis Colts
27. Oakland Raiders++
28. Los Angeles Chargers
29. New England Patriots*
30. Los Angeles Rams*
31. Kansas City Chiefs*
32. Green Bay Packers+++*

+from Chicago ++from Dallas +++from New Orleans
**Final order determined by playoff finish*

2019 SEASON
NFL 100TH CELEBRATION
nfl.com

The NFL will celebrate its 100th season in 2019 with a year-long series of events, initiatives, and programming centered around fans, players, and communities. "NFL 100" officially kicks off at Super Bowl LIII and will be featured at offseason events and then ramp up during the 2019 season – right through Super Bowl LIV in Miami.

Daniel Kucin Jr./Getty Images

AUGUST 1-4

PFHOF ENSHRINEMENT WEEK

profootballhof.com/tickets

Honor the Heroes of the Game at the 2019 Pro Football Hall of Fame Enshrinement Week Powered by Johnson Controls in Canton, Ohio. The new class will be announced on "Selection Saturday," the eve of Super Bowl LIII. Call 844-4HOFTIX for information on tickets and VIP packages for the Enshrinement Ceremony, Hall of Fame Game, and Concert for Legends at Tom Benson Hall of Fame Stadium.

Matt Dunham/AP Images

DATES TBA

INTERNATIONAL SERIES

nfl.com/uk & nfl.com/mexico

The NFL has confirmed plans to play four times in London and once in Mexico City in 2019. The London games will include two at Wembley Stadium and the league's first two games at the new Tottenham Hotspur stadium, while the game in Mexico will be held at Estadio Azteca. The host teams for the international games are Tampa Bay, the L.A. Rams, the L.A. Chargers, Jacksonville, and Oakland.

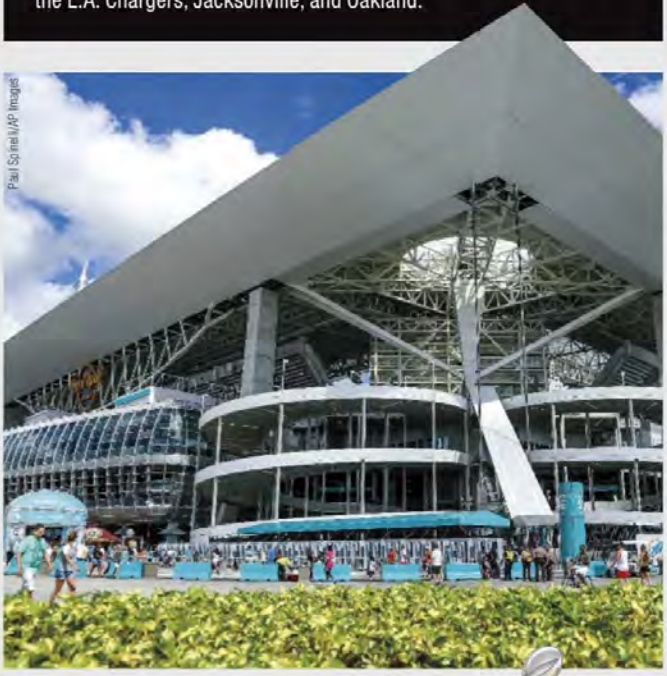
Matt Rourke/AP Images

SEPTEMBER 5

NFL KICKOFF

nfl.com/kickoff

The NFL's centennial season gets underway Thursday, Sept. 5, with a spectacular day-long celebration at the home of the Super Bowl LIII champion. It's all part of *NFL Kickoff Driven By Hyundai*, which in 2018 featured numerous fan-driven events and musical performances, highlighted by Philly-based Boyz II Men singing the national anthem prior to the Eagles' game against the Falcons at Lincoln Financial Field.



Paul Spinelli/AP Images

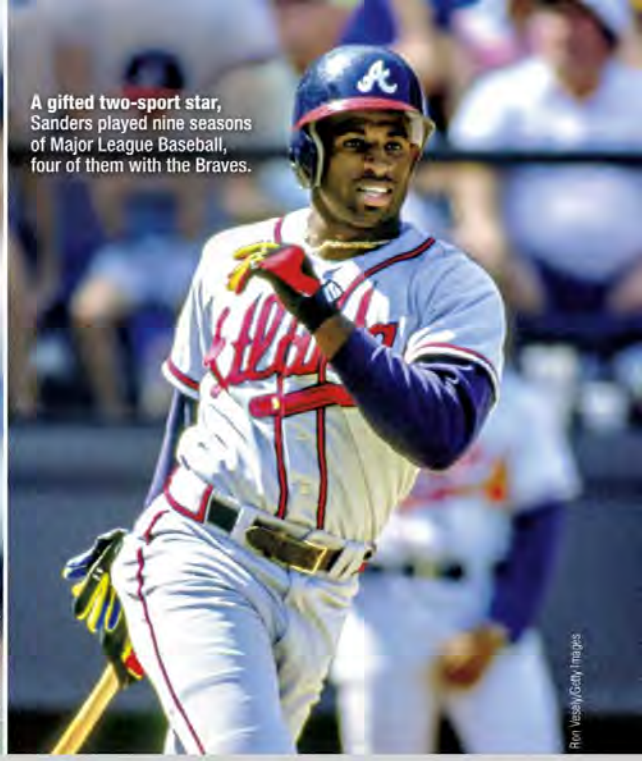
FEBRUARY 2, 2020

SUPER BOWL LIV

nfl.com/superbowl

The Super Bowl heads to South Florida for a record-breaking 11th time as Super Bowl LIV will be played at Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens. FOX will televise the game. To enter a random drawing for tickets, send a request (one per household) by June 1 with your name, address, city, state, ZIP, phone, and email to: Super Bowl Random Drawing, P.O. Box 49140, Strongsville, OH 44149-0140.

Deion Sanders earned All-Pro honors three times with the Falcons and was inducted into the team's Ring of Honor in 2010.



A gifted two-sport star, Sanders played nine seasons of Major League Baseball, four of them with the Braves.

Ron Vesely/Getty Images

PRIMETIME MEMORIES

ATLANTA OPENED ITS HEART TO ME. NOW IT WELCOMES THE WORLD TO SUPER BOWL LIII.

BY DEION SANDERS

Bob Levey/NFL Images

Deion Sanders

THIRTY YEARS AGO THIS APRIL, my life changed forever when the Atlanta Falcons took me fifth overall in the 1989 NFL Draft. It's hard to believe it was that long ago, I know.

Before we go any further down memory lane, let me be clear about something: Atlanta picked me, but I chose Atlanta.

Yes, the city embodied everything I was as a 21-year-old coming out of Florida State. It was flashy and unapologetic – a hip-hop mecca bursting with swagger. The perfect place for Neon Deion. The perfect place for Primetime.

Rockin' gold chains, a fresh Jheri curl (it looked wet but was dry, I promise), and a sense of style, I had complete freedom to be myself. I fell in love with Atlanta for that reason.

Although the city's music scene and overall growth was up-and-coming, Atlanta was starving for a winner in the world of professional sports. When I arrived here in '89, the Falcons had made the postseason just three times in 23 years. Needless to say, we had some work to do. I took it upon myself to change the mindset in the locker room and implement a winning culture, embracing that role with open arms.

Helping turn the franchise around was challenging from the start, but I learned quickly that if you played your heart out and gave the game everything you had, the city and its people were going to ride with you. With that budding relationship and an improving team under coach Jerry Glanville, the Atlanta Falcons were on the map by the 1991 season. Not only did we get back to the playoffs and win a postseason game that year, beating the rival New Orleans Saints in the first round, but we had fun in the process.

The memories from that '91 season still feel like we made them just yesterday – from high-stepping into the end zone, to MC Hammer's "2 Legit 2 Quit" anthem (aka our theme song) taking over the nation, to the celebrations of our success, which often lasted until the sun came up. Man, those were the days.

Those years were definitely memorable, but I couldn't limit myself to purely being a football player in my athletic prime. So, as you can imagine, signing with the Atlanta Braves while playing for the Falcons was no doubt a dream situation for me. I was stretched thin at times between the two sports, but representing the Braves in the 1992 MLB playoffs wasn't something I was going to miss (so be it if I had to take a helicopter to the game).

I never intended to leave "The Big Peach" in 1994, and I'll always be known as a Falcon and a Brave. But playing for other NFL franchises granted me the opportunity to win a Super Bowl in my career. It was an unbelievable ride playing for the San Francisco 49ers and the Dallas Cowboys on the sport's biggest stage. And, to be honest, the Super Bowl truly is everything it's hyped up to be – every player's dream come true. It certainly was mine.

That said, I couldn't be happier that Atlanta is home to Super Bowl LIII. An event of this magnitude gives the city great exposure and the opportunity to show off its Southern hospitality to the world. No city deserves it more.

It's hard to describe just how much the Super Bowl transforms a city, even after experiencing it time and time again as both a player and member of the media, but Atlanta will see the benefits for years to come – like it did as the host city in 1994 and 2000.

I'm grateful to this day for the endless amount of love, support, and opportunity I have received from both the city and the game. With each always being part of my history, I assure you this week is one that I won't soon forget.

***Pro Football Hall of Famer Deion Sanders** is a two-time Super Bowl champion and is the only person to play in both the Super Bowl and the World Series. He's currently an analyst for NFL Network.*

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What is QBREXZA?

QBREXZA is a prescription anticholinergic medicine used on the skin (topical) to treat excessive underarm sweating (primary axillary hyperhidrosis) in adults and children 9 years of age and older.

It is not known if QBREXZA is safe and effective in children under 9 years of age. QBREXZA is for use on the skin in the underarm area only.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

Who should not use QBREXZA?

Do not use QBREXZA if you have certain medical conditions that can be made worse by taking an anticholinergic medicine such as glaucoma, severe ulcerative colitis or certain other serious bowel problems associated with severe ulcerative colitis, myasthenia gravis, and Sjogren's syndrome.

Talk to your healthcare provider if you are not sure if you have a medical condition that can be made worse by taking an anticholinergic medicine.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before using QBREXZA?

Before using QBREXZA, tell your healthcare provider about all of your medical conditions, including if you:

- have prostate or bladder problems, or problems passing urine
- have kidney problems
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if QBREXZA will harm your unborn baby.
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. It is not known if QBREXZA passes into your breast milk. Talk to your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby during treatment with QBREXZA.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription medicines, over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. QBREXZA may affect the way other medicines work causing side effects. **Especially tell your healthcare provider if you take anticholinergic medicines.**

Know the medicines you take. Keep a list of your medicines with you and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.

How should I use QBREXZA?

- Use QBREXZA exactly as your healthcare provider tells you to use it.
- QBREXZA comes as a single-use pre-moistened cloth in individual pouches.
- **QBREXZA should be applied to the clean, dry, intact skin, of your underarm areas only.** Do not apply QBREXZA to broken skin. Do not cover the treated area with a plastic (occlusive) dressing.
- Apply QBREXZA to both underarm areas using 1 cloth **1 time every 24 hours**.

Applying QBREXZA:

- Carefully tear open the pouch to avoid tearing the QBREXZA cloth.
- Unfold the QBREXZA cloth and apply QBREXZA by wiping across 1 entire underarm 1 time. Using the same QBREXZA cloth, wipe across the other underarm 1 time.
- Throw away (discard) the used QBREXZA cloth in the trash.
- **Wash your hands right away after you apply QBREXZA and have thrown away the cloth.** It is important that you wash your hands because the QBREXZA that is still on your hands can cause you to have blurred vision if you touch your eyes.
- Do not reuse the QBREXZA cloth.

What should I avoid while using QBREXZA?

- QBREXZA may cause you to have blurred vision that is temporary. If you develop blurred vision, call your healthcare provider, stop using QBREXZA and do not drive, operate machinery, or do hazardous work until your vision is clear.
- **QBREXZA is flammable.** Avoid heat and flame while applying QBREXZA to your skin.

What are the possible side effects of QBREXZA?

QBREXZA can cause serious side effects, including:

- **New or worsened urinary retention.** People who use QBREXZA may develop new or worse urinary retention. Urinary retention can be caused by a blockage in your bladder. Urinary retention can also happen in men who have a larger than normal prostate. Symptoms of urinary retention may include:
  - difficulty urinating
  - urinating frequently
  - urination in a weak stream or drips
  - full bladder or difficulty emptying your bladder (distended bladder)

  If you have these symptoms, stop using QBREXZA and call your healthcare provider right away.
- **Problems with control of your body temperature.** QBREXZA can cause you to have decreased sweating in areas other than the underarm area which could cause you to become overheated and to develop heat illness. When in hot or very warm temperatures, watch for lack of sweating on your body (generalized) and stop using QBREXZA if you develop lack of sweating on your body.

  Stop using QBREXZA and call your healthcare provider right away if you develop any of these symptoms of heat illness:
  - hot, red skin
  - decreased alertness or passing out (unconsciousness)
  - fast, weak pulse
  - fast, shallow breathing
  - increased body temperature (fever)
- **Blurred vision.** If you develop blurred vision during treatment with QBREXZA, call your healthcare provider, stop using QBREXZA and do not drive, or operate machinery, or do hazardous work until your vision is clear.

The most common side effects of QBREXZA include:

- dry mouth
- dilation of the pupils of your eyes (mydriasis)
- sore throat
- skin redness, burning/stinging or itching in underarm area
- headache
- problems with urination
- blurred vision
- nasal dryness
- throat, eye, and skin dryness
- constipation

These are not all of the possible side effects of QBREXZA.

Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088 or **www.fda.gov/medwatch**.

General information

Keep QBREXZA and all medicines out of the reach of children.

Do not use QBREXZA for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give QBREXZA to other people, even if they have the same symptoms you have. It may harm them. You can ask your pharmacist or healthcare provider for information about QBREXZA that is written for health professionals.

For more information, go to **www.QBREXZA.com** or call 1-877-DERMIRA.

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